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# BRITISH COLUMBIA EMERGENCY RESPONSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (BCERMS)

## OVERVIEW (INTERIM)

(Based on Operations and Management Standard 1000)

The province of British Columbia has developed and adopted BCERMS as a comprehensive management system that ensures a coordinated and organized response to all emergencies.

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# BCERMS MANUAL

## AMENDMENT RECORD

This manual is a living document which will require amendment on a regular basis.

Amendment recommendations should be forwarded to the attention of the Director of the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP). Amendments will be incorporated into the manual on a semi-annual basis. PEP Headquarters will maintain a master record of amendments. Amendments will be controlled by showing the revision date contained in the footer of any revised page, for example:

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# Acknowledgements

The British Columbia Government's Inter-agency Emergency Preparedness Council (IEPC) established a British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) Standards and Certification Committee. The committee was mandated to develop the standards and certification requirements for all aspects of BCERMS.

The BCERMS *standard* was developed using five major references:

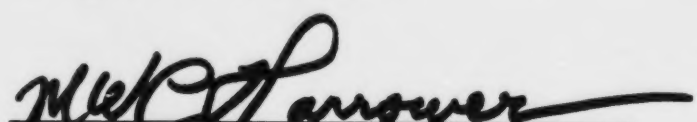
- Emergency Program Act (1993) and Regulations
- British Columbia Strategy for Response
- National Fire Protection Association Standard 1561: Standard on Fire Department Incident Management System
- Incident Command System National Training Curriculum sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group in the United States
- California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)

This overview document establishes the standards and guiding principles for all four levels of the emergency response management system.

The contribution of the IEPC BCERMS Standards Committee, the Justice Institute and RiskWorks Consulting, Inc., is acknowledged.

**Approved**

**N. Logan Stewart, Co-Chair**



**Mervin W. C. Harrower, Co-Chair**

**Inter-agency Emergency Preparedness Council**

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# Common Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **BCERMS** – British Columbia Emergency Response Management System | The British Columbia Response Management System is a comprehensive management scheme that ensures a coordinated and organized provincial response and recovery to any and all emergency incidents. The broad spectrum of components of BCERMS includes operations and control management, qualifications, technology, training and publications. |
| **CCG** – Central Coordination Group | The Central Coordination Group provides overall direction to all provincial agencies and resources supporting or assisting with the emergency situation. |
| **DFA** – Disaster Financial Assistance | The Provincial Emergency Program manages the Disaster Financial Assistance program to help those affected by a natural disaster. DFA is designed to replace or restore items essential to a home, livelihood or community when insurance is not readily available. |
| **DOC** – Department Operations Centre | An operations centre established and operated by a department of a jurisdiction or agency to coordinate their emergency response efforts. Structure and function is similar to EOC. |
| **ECC** – Emergency Coordination Centre | The Emergency Coordination Centre at the Provincial Emergency Program headquarters receives and disseminates information from multiple sources regarding emergency situations. The 24-hour Emergency Coordination Centre also serves as the "incident message centre" for the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre. |
| **EOC** – Emergency Operations Centre | A pre-designated facility established by a local authority, jurisdiction or agency to coordinate the site response and support in an emergency. |
| **ESS** – Emergency Social Services | Emergency Social Services are those services that are provided short term (generally 72 hours) to preserve the emotional and physical well-being of evacuees and response workers in emergency situations. |

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| **IAP**- Incident Action Plan | Action plans are developed to guide operations centres activities during pre-impact, response and recovery phases. Action plans are developed according to a standardized process that assigns planning responsibilities to specific organizational components. All action plans are approved by command/management. |
| **IC**- Incident Commander | The Incident Commander is responsible for all direction at the site. This includes overall responsibility for the safety and health of all personnel and for other persons operating within the Incident Command System. |
| **ICS** – Incident Command System | A standardized at-scene emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its user(s) to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. |
| **MOC**–Ministry Operations Centre | An Operations Centre established and operated by a ministry to coordinate their emergency response efforts. Structure and function is similar to EOC. |
| **MROC** – Ministry Regional Operations Centre | An Operations Centre established and operated by a ministry to coordinate the ministry's emergency response in that region. Structure and function is similar to PREOC. |
| **PECC** – Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre | An Emergency Operations Centre established and operated at the provincial central coordination level to direct and coordinate the provincial government's overall emergency or disaster response and recovery efforts. Located at the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) headquarters in Victoria. |
| **PREOC** – Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre | An Emergency Operations Centre established and operated at the regional level by provincial agencies to coordinate provincial emergency response efforts. |

## 1.0 Introduction

The Province of British Columbia provincial emergency management structure has developed and adopted BCERMS (British Columbia Emergency Response Management System) as a comprehensive management system that ensures a coordinated and organized response to all emergencies and disasters.

Figure 1-1 details the provincial emergency management structure.

This document describes the standards for emergency management at the four operational levels of BCERMS:

- 1001 - Site Level
- 1002 - Site Support Level
- 1003 - Provincial Regional Coordination Level
- 1004 - Provincial Central Coordination Level

**NOTE: Wherever the acronym EOC is used in this document, it is to be considered interchangeable with MOC and DOC.**

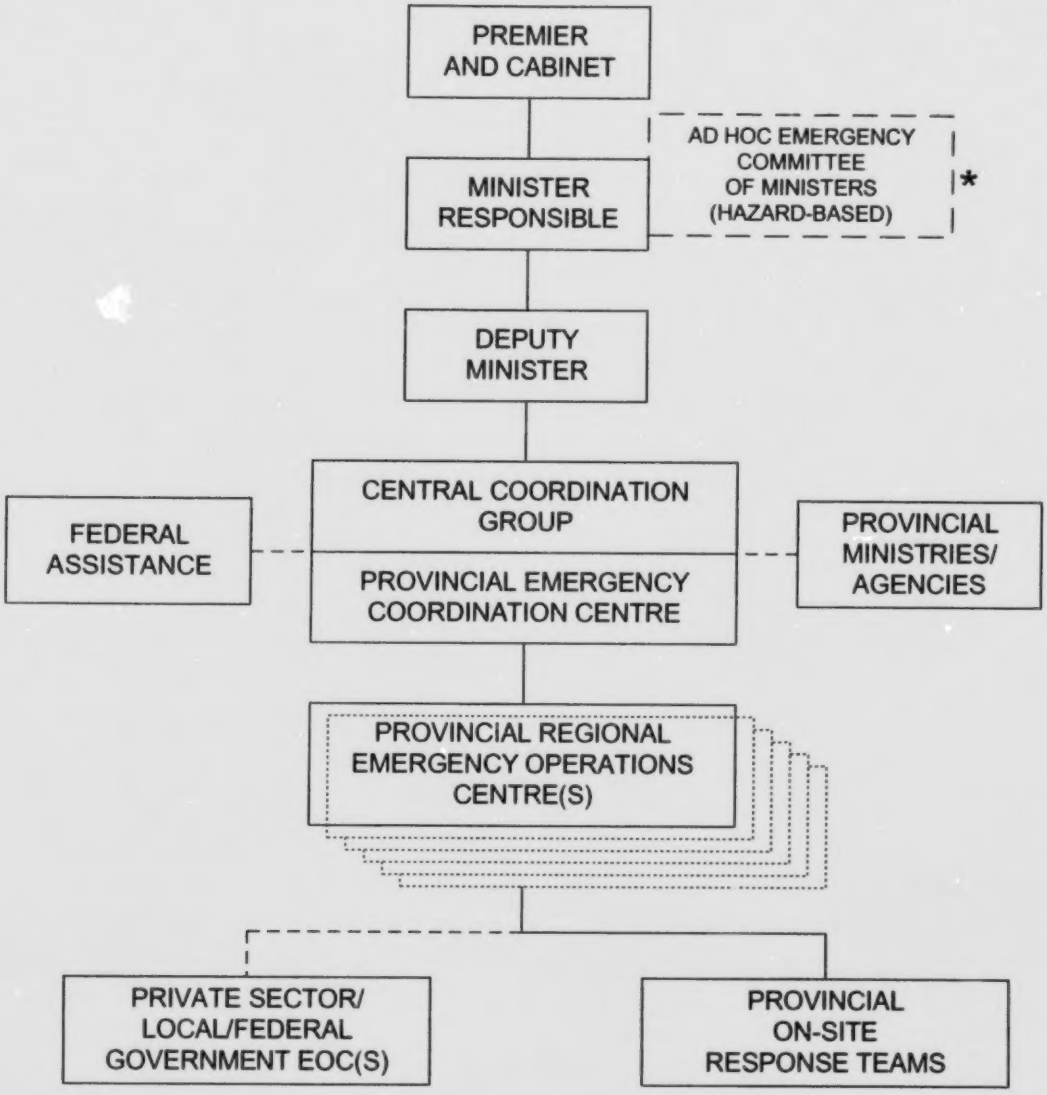
## 1.1 Background

BCERMS is based upon the Incident Command System (ICS) originally developed as a fire response management system by various U.S. states. ICS has been widely adopted by first responders and emergency management programs throughout North America.

In the fall of 1992, the provincial government endorsed this emergency management response system and mandated its application for all ministries.

This overview document adjusts the American ICS to meet the needs of British Columbia.

**Figure 1-1 British Columbia Emergency Management Structure**




* Ad hoc committee that may be formed in the event of a severe emergency or catastrophic event.

The adoption of BCERMS fulfills the requirements of Section 5 (7) of the Emergency Program Management Regulation and:

- standardizes the process for the delivery of a multiple-ministry, multiple-agency coordinated response to all emergencies,
- guides key ministries and Crown corporations in preparing their emergency plans, and
- clarifies response functions of supporting provincial ministries.

## 1.2 Purpose

BCERMS provides a framework for a standardized process for organizing and managing a response to emergencies and disasters in BC.

The components of BCERMS are:

**Operations and Control:**
- A common organizational structure and control method for the management of personnel, equipment, facilities and resources.
- The system enhances communications between representative agencies in the preparation and implementation of tactical response operations.
- Provides a site response structure based on the Incident Command System plus three levels of coordinated support and direction.

**Qualifications:**
- Establishes a standard for the management of each functional area and level within the emergency response management system.

**Technology:**
- Establishes the use of common technology in support of emergency operations.

**Training:**
- Mandates the training of designated personnel to meet the established standards.

  Note: Training shall be delivered using this standard as well as the follow-on operational

guidelines for each of the four emergency management levels.

**Publications:**

- Mandates distribution of a common set of forms, reports, instructional terminology and other written material in support of the standard.

## 1.3 Scope

All provincial government ministries, agencies and government corporations identified in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Emergency Program Management Regulation shall apply the standards set out in BCERMS. For simplicity, the remainder of this standard refers to these provincial entities collectively as "agencies."

These standards are recommended best practices for local authorities, other local governments, and federal government agencies, First Nations, regional districts, and non-government agencies.

When regional districts have agreements in place to coordinate the activities of member municipalities, they may operate as a local authority EOC, applying BCERMS standards.

## 1.4 Overview of the Four BCERMS Levels

**Details on the role and functions of each level and procedures and checklists for each function may be found in a series of four *Operational Guidelines*, one for each of the four BCERMS levels.**

**Site Level – 1001:**
At the site level, resources are applied to solve the problems presented by an emergency incident. The BC Incident Command System (ICS) is used to manage the response.

Responders may represent all levels of government and the private sector. Response on-site is directed by single command or unified command from a single on-site incident command post or, if there are several

sites, by Area Command as described in *Site Level Operational Guidelines.*

**Site Support Level – 1002:**
When the site level response requires off-site support, an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or Department Operations Centre (DOC) may be activated.

The EOC:

- provides communication with the site level,
- provides policy guidance,
- manages the local multiple-agency support to the site level, and
- acquires and deploys additional resources, obtained locally or from other EOCs or the provincial regional level.

**Provincial Regional Coordination Level – 1003:**
The provincial regional coordination level acts in support of the site support level, and:

- manages the assignment of multiple-ministry and agency support to individual site support locations or multiple site support level locations,
- acquires and deploys resources at the request of the site support level, and
- provides emergency response services where incidents cross local authority boundaries, or where local authorities are not organized to fulfill their role.

The regional level does not normally communicate directly with the site level.

**Provincial Central Coordination Level – 1004:**
The provincial central coordination level manages the overall provincial government response, which includes the provision of support for the regional levels, and:

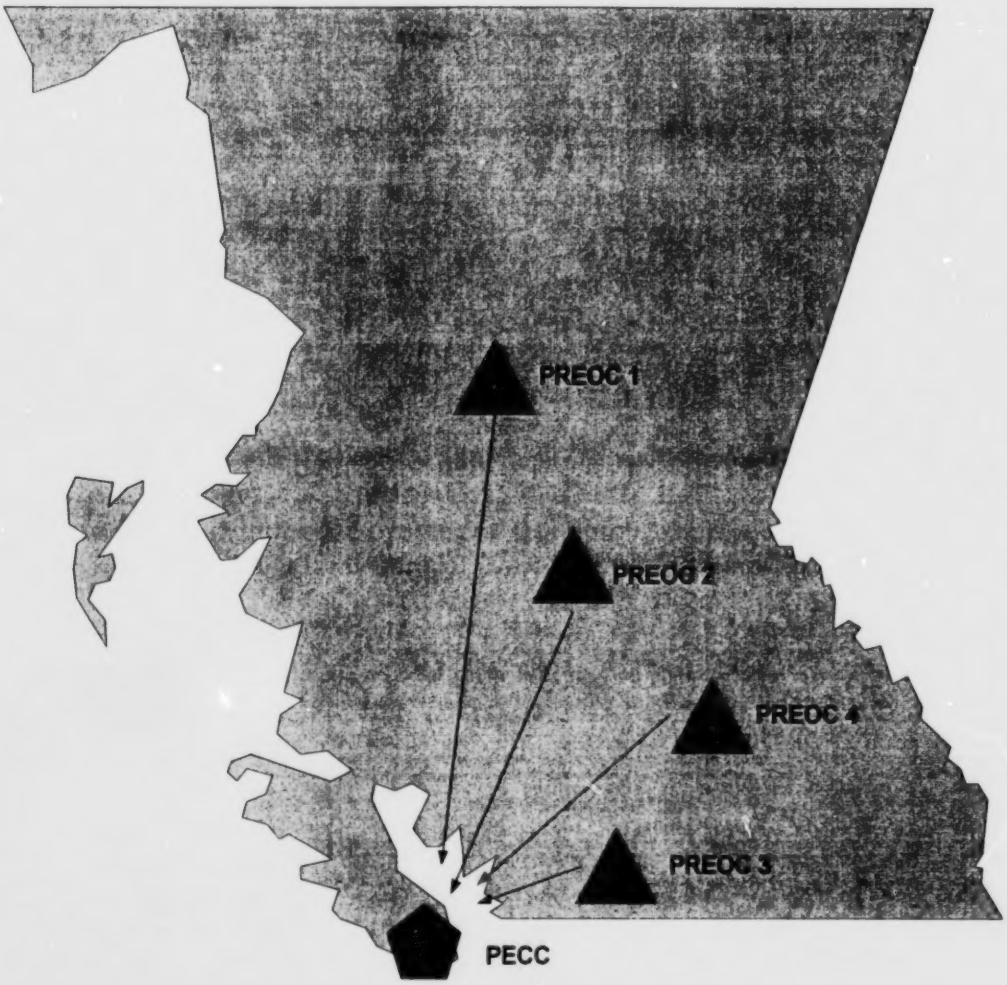
- seeks direction of senior elected officials,
- obtains authority of the minister for a declaration of a provincial emergency,
- provides provincial policy guidance,

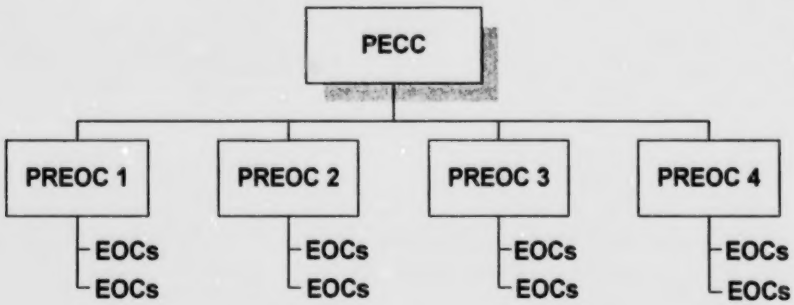
- establishes provincial priorities,
- manages provincial emergency public information activities,
- manages the acquisition and deployment of provincial, federal, inter-provincial and international resources, and
- provides coordination and other support services to provincial Ministry Operations Centres (MOCs) and Crown corporation operations centres, as well as federal emergency response agencies.

## 1.5 Implementation

In order to implement the BCERMS concept of emergency management, written *Operational Guidelines* specific to the appropriate level and type of incident must be developed by each participating agency. Supporting provincial ministries and agencies must also develop *Operational Guidelines*, specific to their key ministry responsibilities.

**Figure 1-2 Provincial Regional Coordination**
**Provincial Central Coordinatin Relationship**



## 2.0 Guiding Principles

BCERMS is a management system with a set of policies and guiding principles that apply to all four levels.

## 2.1 Response Objectives

BCERMS supports a prescribed set of response objectives set out in priority as follows to:

- provide for the safety and health of all responders,
- save lives,
- reduce suffering,
- protect public health,
- protect government infrastructure,
- protect property,
- protect the environment, and
- reduce economic and social losses.

## 2.2 Incident Command System

BCERMS has adopted many features of the Incident Command System (ICS) for application at site, site support, provincial regional coordination, and provincial central coordination levels within British Columbia. The Incident Command System has been well tested in a range of emergencies and is designed to provide an all-hazard, single or multi-agency or jurisdiction emergency response management framework.

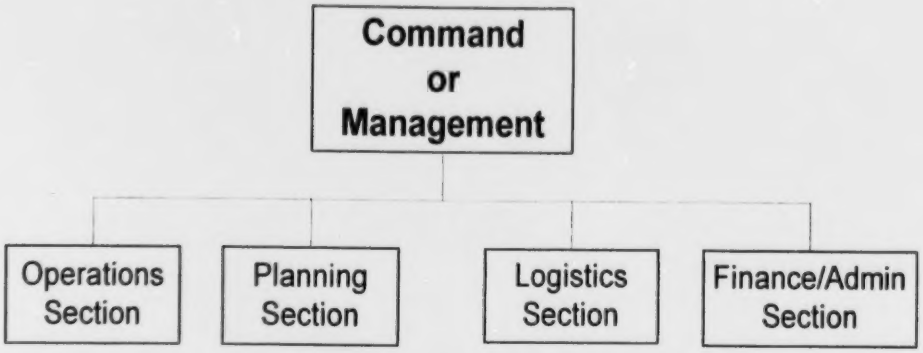
## 2.3 Management Functions

BCERMS uses the five essential management functions of the Incident Command System. These are:

- Command or Management,*
- Operations,
- Planning,
- Logistics, and
- Finance/Administration.

* The term Command is used in ICS at the site level. Management is used at the EOC, PREOC and PECC levels.

**Figure 2-1 Command or Management**




## 2.4 Management Support

Certain staff functions are required to assist the person in charge during emergencies. These are referred to as command or management staff. There are three positions:

- Risk Management (safety at site level),
- Liaison, and
- Information.

## 2.5 Management by Objectives

The management by objectives feature means that each BCERMS level establishes objectives to be achieved for a given time frame, known as an "operational period". These objectives always relate to the response goals stated earlier.

An objective is an aim or end of an action to be performed. It is commonly stated as "what" must be achieved. Each objective may have one or more strategies and tactical actions needed to achieve the objective. Strategies are commonly stated as "how" actions should be performed. The tactics are the detailed steps of a strategy taken at the site level to achieve objectives.

## 2.6 Agency Executive Policy Group

An agency executive or policy group, composed of elected or senior management officials provides:

- guidance,
- overall direction and priorities for managing the emergency or disaster situation,
- parameters for expenditures,
- acquires/authorizes additional outside support/resources,
- public information direction, and
- approves declarations of a state of emergency and the delegation of extraordinary power.

Policy direction is primarily provided at the support levels.

## 2.7 Operational Periods

An operational period is the length of time set by command at the site level, and by management at the other levels, to achieve a given set of objectives. The operational period may vary in length and will be determined largely by the dynamics of the emergency situation. An operational period may be designated to a maximum 24-hour period.

## 2.8 Action Planning

All levels of BCERMS develop action plans to guide their activities during pre-impact, response and recovery phases.

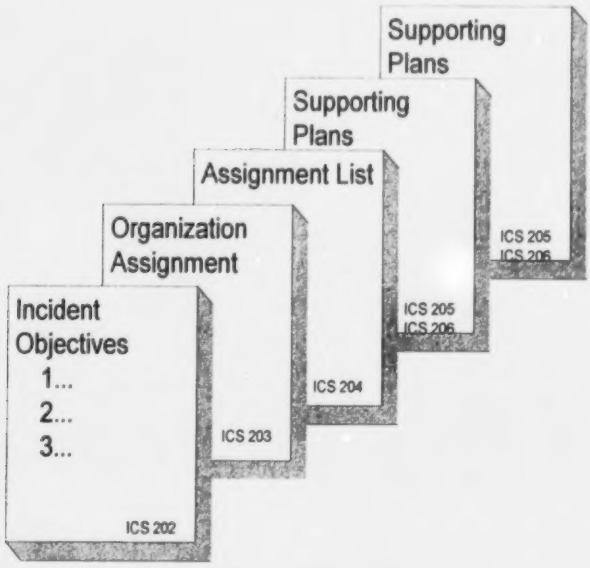
There are two general types of action plans in BCERMS. At the site level, verbal or written incident action plans contain **objectives**, **strategies** and **tactical assignments** for one operational period. At each of the three higher levels, action plans address the **policies**, **priorities** and **resource requirements** that support the level immediately below as well as **direction** across government in larger emergencies and disasters.

For small incidents of short duration at the site level, the incident action plan may not be written. However, when several jurisdictions or agencies are involved or the incident will require changes in shifts of personnel over another operational period, an action plan should be written.

At the site support, provincial regional and provincial central coordination levels, the use of action plans provides personnel with direction or policy, priorized objectives and the steps required to achieve the objectives. Action plans are an essential and required element in achieving objectives under BCERMS.

Action plans are developed according to a standardized process that assigns planning responsibilities to specific organizational components. All action plans are approved by Command/ Management.

**Figure 2-2 Incident Action Plan**



## 2.9 Organizational Unity and Hierarchy of Command or Management

Organizational unity means that every individual within a BCERMS organization has a designated supervisor. Hierarchy or chain of Command/Management means an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the organization with lower levels subordinate to, and connected to, higher levels. Direction follows the chain of command.

## 2.10 Command/Management Structure

BCERMS provides a series of supervisory levels.

Command/Management determines which functions and elements of their organization are to be activated.

The BCERMS is modular to allow elements to be activated or deactivated as the needs of the incident/emergency change over time. The system provides for expansion as additional resources are required.

BCERMS defines standardized supervisory assignments for all four levels. Incident Commanders or Directors activate these assignments.

Standardized supervisory assignments define the roles, authority, and responsibilities of assigned personnel. Assignments are defined by function or by geographic location at the site of the incident, or by a combination of function and location. The three upper levels of BCERMS use assignment by function. An assignment that is defined by function is based on performing or supervising a particular activity or set of activities.

An assignment that is defined by location is based on supervising all activities that are conducted within a designated geographic area. The area and activities are defined by standard terminology or specified by the Incident Commander or Director at the time of assignment.

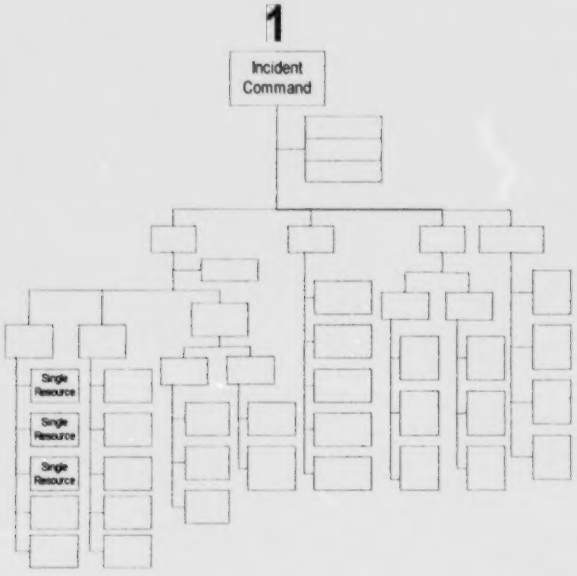
## 2.11 Organization Modular and Flexible

Only those functional levels and elements that are required to meet current objectives need to be activated. When each level is activated their Command/Management levels will always be staffed.

The function of any non-activated element will be the responsibility of the next highest element in the organization. Each activated position must have a person in charge. However, a supervisor may supervise more than one element.

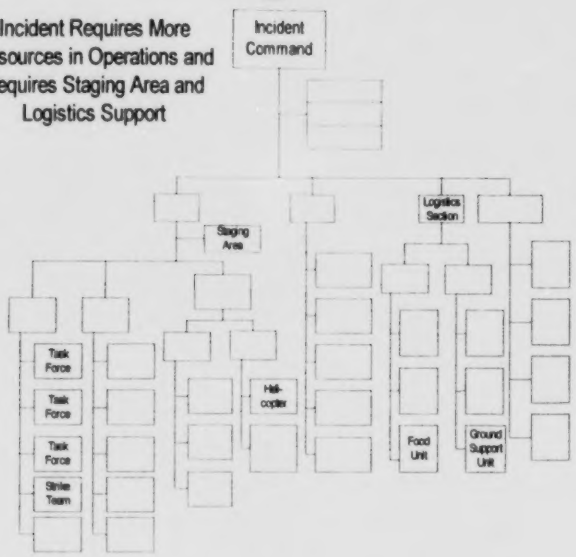
The Incident Commander or Director has the authority to modify standard assignments or to apply them in a manner that suits the particular needs of an incident. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander or Director to clearly identify the parameters of an assignment when deviating from the standard assignments. (See Figure 2-3 following.)

**Figure 2-3 Small Incident Command & Single Resource**



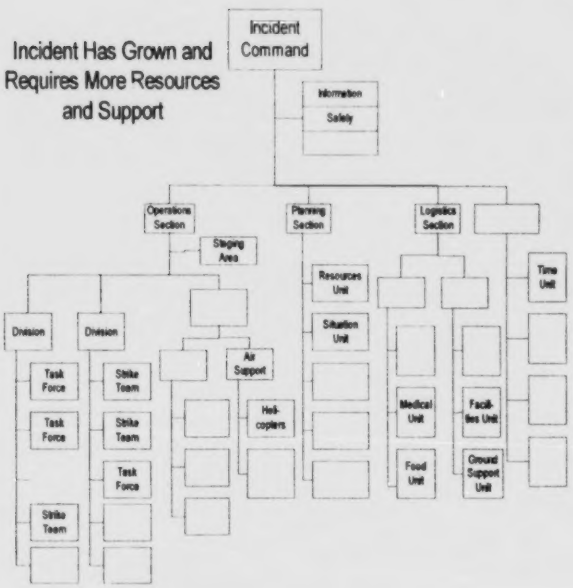
**2**

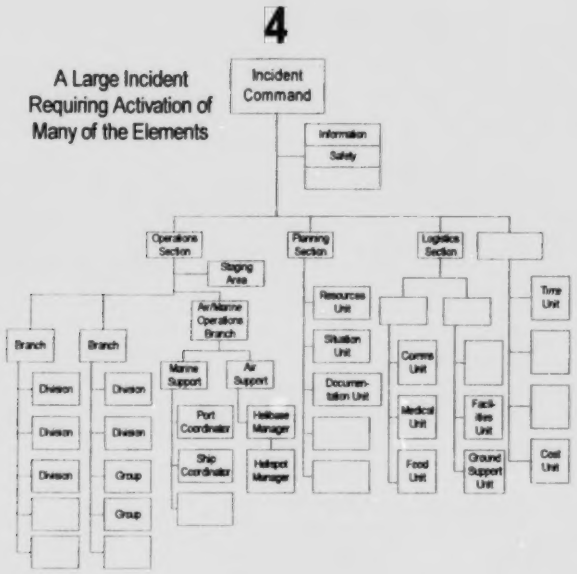
Incident Requires More Resources in Operations and Requires Staging Area and Logistics Support




**3**

Incident Has Grown and Requires More Resources and Support






## 2.12 Transfer of Command

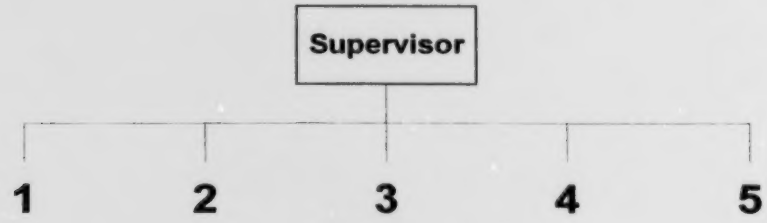
*Operational Guidelines* at all BCERMS levels describe the procedures to establish and transfer command.

## 2.13 Span of Control

Maintaining a reasonable span of control is the responsibility of every supervisor at all BCERMS levels. The command and management structures maintain an effective supervisory span of control at each level of the organization.

An effective span of control is determined by the ability of each supervisor to monitor the activities of assigned staff and to communicate effectively with them. At no time should span of control exceed seven (7) staff for each supervisor. The optimum span of control range is five (5) staff per supervisor.

**Figure 2-4 Optimum Span of Control at 1 to 5**




## 2.14 Accountability for Personnel

All supervisors must maintain a constant awareness of the position, function, and location of all personnel assigned to operate under their supervision. This awareness is necessary to maintain a high level of operational safety.

The location and function of all resources deployed under BCERMS must also be accounted for at all times. All resources that arrive at the scene of an incident, or at an EOC, PREOC or PECC must check-in at designated locations, receive their assignments, and be recorded in the tracking system.

The system must include specific means to identify and track resources and personnel entering and leaving hazardous areas, such as confined spaces or areas where special protective equipment is required.

Agencies must establish *Operational Guidelines* to evacuate personnel from an area where an imminent hazard exists and to account for their safety. These guidelines should also include a method(s) for notifying all personnel in the affected area of potential dangers.

## 2.15 Common Terminology

In BCERMS, common terminology is applied to functional elements, position titles, facility designations and resources. The purpose of common terminology is to enable multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction organizations and resources to work together effectively. The common terminology approved by the Inter-agency

Emergency Preparedness Council is reflected in the BCERMS standards, this *Overview* and the respective *Operational Guidelines* for the four BCERMS levels.

## 2.16 Resource Management

At all BCERMS levels, there are varying directing, coordinating, tracking or inventorying activities for managing resources. Resources assigned to an incident or emergency may be managed in three ways:

- single resource,
- task force, or
- strike team.

Resources at the site are always in one of three status conditions:

- available, or
- assigned, or
- out of service.

Resources at all levels are tracked to ensure accountability.

## 2.17 Information Flow/Direction

Information within BCERMS must be managed carefully both within each level and among the four BCERMS levels. In broad terms, there are four types of information transactions common to emergencies:

- direction,
- situation reporting,
- resource requests, and
- general information.

***Policy, command and managerial direction*** follows the chain of command established for each BCERMS level. These lines of authority are shown in organization charts for Incident Command, EOC, PREOC, and PECC presented in Sections 3.0 and 4.0. Between different BCERMS levels, information direction, priorities and resource requests are communicated following set *Operational Guidelines*.

**Situation reporting and assessment** is managed in the Planning Section (Situation Unit).

The *Operational Guidelines* for each BCERMS level describe the methods used to pass information.

Situation data may be collected from a number of sources, including the Operations, Logistics, Finance/ Administration sections and the command staff. Situation information is also received from other BCERMS levels and from outside agencies.

Following analysis and input from other sections and command/management, the Planning section develops the action plan for its BCERMS level. It also summarizes situation information for the Information Officer and the next BCERMS level.

The Commander or Director reviews and approves situation information before transmittal.

## Figure 2-5 Primary BCERMS Support Levels

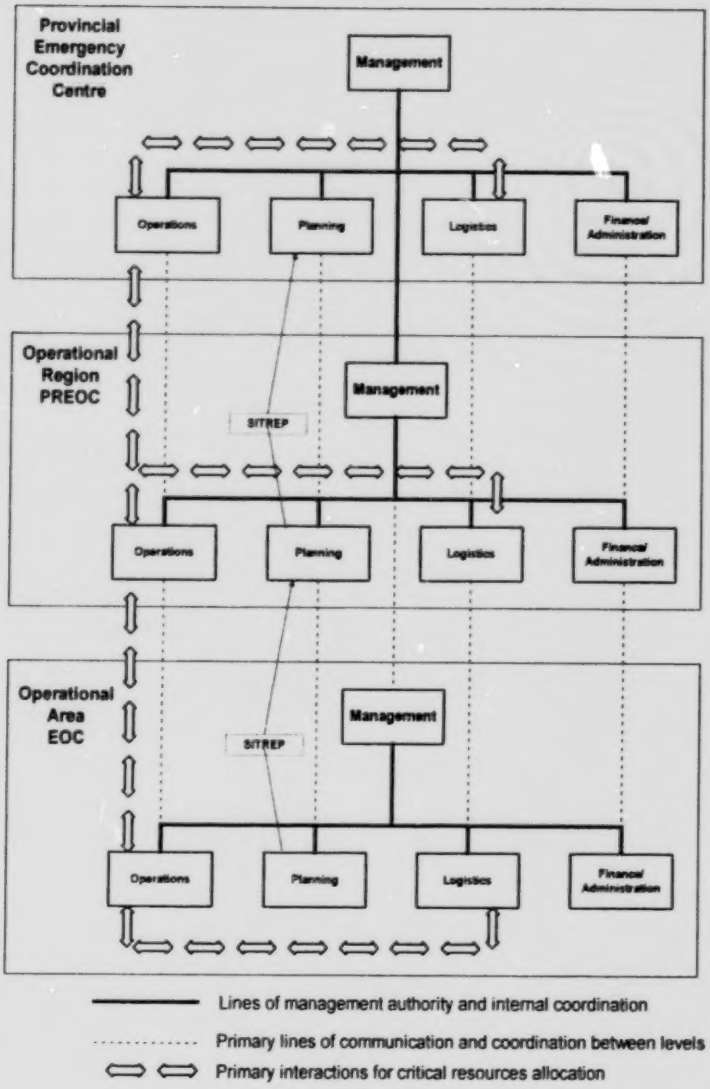



Figure 2-5 illustrates the lines of management authority and internal coordination flow of situation reports, communication between levels and primary interactions for critical resource allocations.

## 2.18 Resource Requests

Sound planning to determine resource needs is essential at every stage of an emergency operation. In BCERMS there is an effective planning process that provides a framework for determining the resource needs for each BCERMS level.

**Site Level:**
At the site level, the Incident Commander (IC) organizes the incident response by bringing essential personnel and equipment resources together into a formalized and cohesive relationship to solve the problems at hand.

A planning meeting is held to develop an incident action plan for each operational period. The Planning Section Chief chairs this meeting. One of the important results of the meeting is the resources, support and overhead (key supervisory personnel) order (request). This is included in the incident action plan that is approved by the IC. The BCERMS organization developed for each operational period establishes essential chain of command relationships and provides the framework for all resource assignments on an incident.

Once the IC has approved the plan and if the Supply Unit has been activated, it has the authority to order the resources. If not activated, then the next higher supervisory position has this authority.

Ordering normally takes place either through single or multiple dispatch centres.

An EOC (Site Support Level) may receive resource requests in a number of ways: from dispatch centres unable to fill requests from site(s), or directly from the site, through the Logistics Section, or through the Operations Section.

All requests must have approval of the IC. This is normally through the incident action plan (IAP). There are provisions in ICS for resource ordering outside the IAP where changes need to be made during an operational period.

**Site Support Level:**
All resource requests received in any element of the EOC must be passed to the Planning Section. This section "rolls-up" all requests on a regular or emergency basis as the case may be. This is critical information for planning. This requires close cooperation among Planning, Operations and Logistics. Regular requests are included in the EOC action plan, which is approved by the EOC Director. The Director also approves emergency orders.

Functional branches within the Operations Section usually fill most resource requests. Logistics, working with Finance/Administration, will source and procure critical and "non-standard" resources.

When a local authority EOC cannot source a resource locally, requests are sent to a PREOC, if activated. If not activated, then requests are sent to the Provincial Emergency Program.

The EOC Planning Section prepares action plans that contain resource needs. Operations Section receives ongoing resource requests. The EOC Director approves all requests to the Provincial Regional Coordination level. Orders, depending on the type, are sent from either EOC requests, Operations or Logistics to their PREOC counterparts. This requires close coordination between Logistics and Operations at both the site support and the provincial regional levels.

**Provincial Regional Coordination Level:**
All resource requests reaching the PREOC must be tracked, priorized and assigned to one or more of the functional sections for action. High priority requests receive immediate action.

The various functional branches within Operations will attempt to fill orders following the PREOC Director's direction. The PREOC's Planning Section takes all outstanding resource requests and incorporates them into the PREOC action plan for PREOC Director approval. Critical (those in short supply) and "non-standard" requests are sourced and procured by Logistics working with Finance/Administration.

Resource requests that are beyond the capability of the PREOC are referred to the PECC.

**Provincial Central Coordination Level:**
Resource requests referred to the PECC must be tracked, priorized and assigned. Many resource requests require coordination among the various sections.

Planning meetings propose priorities for the approval of the Director. When resources are limited, or not immediately available, delivery will be rationed in accordance with life and safety issues which would be assigned the highest priority.

The PECC is responsible for seeking additional resources from the national and international levels. National and international resources are deployed in accordance with provincial priorities.

General information may be exchanged horizontally and vertically within any BCERMS level and between levels. Requests for resources must follow the chain laid down above.

Details on information flow and resource requests in BCERMS are provided in the *Operational Guidelines* for each level.

## 2.19 Information and Resource Tracking

Every EOC, regardless of level, must have a manual or automated process for recording and tracking policy group, command and/or management decisions and direction. Decisions related to ordered evacuations, declarations of a state of emergency, resource allocation and expenditures must be documented.

Resource requests require coordination amongst a variety of sections and agency representatives. Multiple requests received by the ECC by a wide variety of means must be tracked to insure no critical request is lost.

Requests must be vetted, prioritized, assigned, tracked and signed off by management when closed.

Resource requests are assigned the following priority levels:

- High, or
- Medium, or
- Low.

The management team and the EOC staff must be able to determine the current status of all requests, the section assigned primary responsibility for action and the details of any action taken or planned. This information is critical during the briefing and hand-over process.

The tracking documents constitute a component of the documentation of the emergency operation and are critical as a risk management tool.

## 2.20 Telecommunications

Among all BCERMS levels, there must be a dedicated effort to ensure that telecommunications systems, planning and information flows are being accomplished in an effective manner.

Standard protocols and terminology are used at all levels. Plain English for all telecommunications is used to reduce the confusion that can be created when radio codes are used. Standard terminology and formats are used to transmit information, including strategic modes of operation, situation reports, logistics, tactical operations and emergency notifications of imminent safety concerns.

Agencies establish operational guidelines to support the escalation of operations from small to large or from routine to unusual without requiring major changes or transitions. Normal site communications typically involve two-way radio and cellular telephones. The following are telecommunications methods for the upper three BCERMS levels:

- E-mail,
- Fax,
- Telephone (land line),
- Radio Telephone (cellular, satellite),

- Two-way Radio (amateur, commercial), and
- Video-Conferencing.

Agencies develop their communications systems to provide reserve capacity for unusually complex situations where effective communications could become critical. An integrated communications plan is developed as part of each action plan.

In drafting the communications protocols, agencies give priority to the transmission of emergency messages and notification of imminent hazards over routine communications.

*Operational Guidelines* need to be developed at each level for communication operators and dispatchers who provide support to emergency operations. In order to function effectively, operators and dispatchers should receive BCERMS training.

## 2.21 Personnel and Facility Identification

In conjunction with the application of common terminology within BCERMS, it is essential to have a common identification system for facilities and personnel filling positions. The following identifying colours for specific functions are used by all provincial agencies. They also represent a recommended best practice for local authorities, First Nations, federal agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

| | |
|---|---|
| Green | Incident Commander/Director |
| Red | Command/Management Staff |
| Orange | Operations |
| Blue | Planning |
| Yellow | Logistics |
| Grey | Finance/Administration |

In addition to these core-identifying colours, individual operations centres are free to use different colours for other functions. Identification may take the form of a vest or armband. These identifiers do not preclude any personnel from wearing their agency's insignia or uniform.

An Incident Command Post is marked with a flashing green light, and EOCs, PREOCs, and the PECC should be marked with appropriate signage.

## 2.22 Unified Command

Unified command is a team process, allowing agencies with primary responsibility for an incident to establish a common set of incident objectives or priorities at the site.

Unified command may be established by the agencies having jurisdictional or functional responsibility for the incident. This allows agencies having legitimate responsibility at an incident to be part of the incident command function. Unified command may be used for the other levels of BCERMS.

The kind of incident and the location of the incident dictate the composition of the unified command. It is important to note that only the key agencies with primary jurisdiction should occupy unified command positions.

When unified command is established, the following always applies:

- the incident response operates under a single, coordinated Incident Action Plan,
- one Operations Section Chief has responsibility for implementing the Incident Action Plan, and
- one Incident Command Post is established.

## 2.23 Documentation

It is extremely important to accurately document actions taken during emergencies. There must be a documented record of all policy and command/ management decisions and direction. Resource requests are also logged and tracked to ensure the response provided is documented. BCERMS requires every position at all levels to keep logs. This tracks and monitors the effectiveness of the response and tracks expenditures for cost accounting.

Incident Commanders and Directors of the upper three levels are responsible for preparing after-action evaluation reports on all aspects of the emergencies within their operational or jurisdictional area. In addition, they are responsible to have all documentation complete and available in the event of a public inquiry.

Time recording uses the 24-hour clock and is stated as local time to account for the time zone differences in BC. All dates are written as YYYYMMDD. All measurements will use the metric format, except where law or convention dictates otherwise for some responders, such as mariners and aviators.

## 2.24 Emergency Personnel Rehabilitation

Command/management always consider the circumstances of each emergency and provide for the rest and rehabilitation of personnel under their supervision. At the incident site, this should include medical evaluation and treatment, food and fluid replenishment, and relief from extreme weather and working conditions, according to the circumstances of the incident.

At an EOC, PREOC, or PECC, provision for adequate food, fluid replenishment, rest, and access to medical attention must be available.

All supervisory personnel monitor the physical and mental condition of personnel operating within their span of control and ensure that adequate measures are taken to provide for their safety and health. Supervisory staff ensures that fatigued or stressed personnel are put on out-of-service status until safe to return to their position. In addition, command/ management and supervisors ensure critical incident stress debriefing services are available to staff at all levels of BCERMS.

## 2.25 Risk Management

Risk management is the process of planning and implementing decisions that will minimize the adverse effects of accidental and business losses on an organization. It is used every day and during emergencies.

Agencies incorporate the principles and practices of risk management in their response and recovery plans and operational guidelines. These include:

- a policy statement supporting risk management,
- identifying functions or positions with responsibility for overseeing risk management, and
- specifying risk management procedures.

Incident Commanders and EOC, PREOC, PECC Directors always ensure that good risk management practices are applied for all incidents. Risk management is applied throughout the response or support organizations, so that every function contributes.

At the site level, the Incident Commander is responsible for this function. At the BCERMS site support, provincial regional coordination, and provincial central coordination levels, Directors may activate the command staff position of Risk Management Officer.

The scope of the risk management effort extends to all losses, all victims, and all entities participating in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The Risk Management Officer provides personnel with basic knowledge of risk management and the objectives to be achieved.

The Risk Management Officer informs the Director of all significant risk issues and provides factual information for Policy Groups.

Agencies apply risk management based upon the following strategies:

- assess damage and loss by identifying and analyzing loss exposures in the categories of personnel, property and liability,
- examine feasible alternative risk management techniques in the following general categories:
  - exposure avoidance
  - loss prevention
  - loss reduction
  - segregation of exposures (separation and/or duplication)
  - contractual risk transfer
  - risk financing,
- select the apparent best techniques,
- ensure the chosen techniques are incorporated into plans,
- monitor and suggest adjustments as necessary,
- provide for the overall safety and health of response, supporting and assisting personnel,
- advise on actions to reduce loss and suffering, and
- advise members of the response organization.

Agencies apply risk management based upon the *Operational Guidelines*.

The analysis should consider both frequency and severity.

## 2.26 Training and Qualifications

Provincial agencies should ensure that all personnel who may be involved in emergency activities are trained in BCERMS to their expected assignment levels or job functions. Command/management makes assignments based on the availability, qualifications, and expertise of personnel.

# 3.0 Site Level – Standard 1001

## 3.1 Introduction

The vast majority of incidents occurring within the province are managed and resolved at the site level by first responders.

Provincial emergency response agencies responding at the site level use the BC Incident Command System as set out in the BCERMS Site Level Standard.

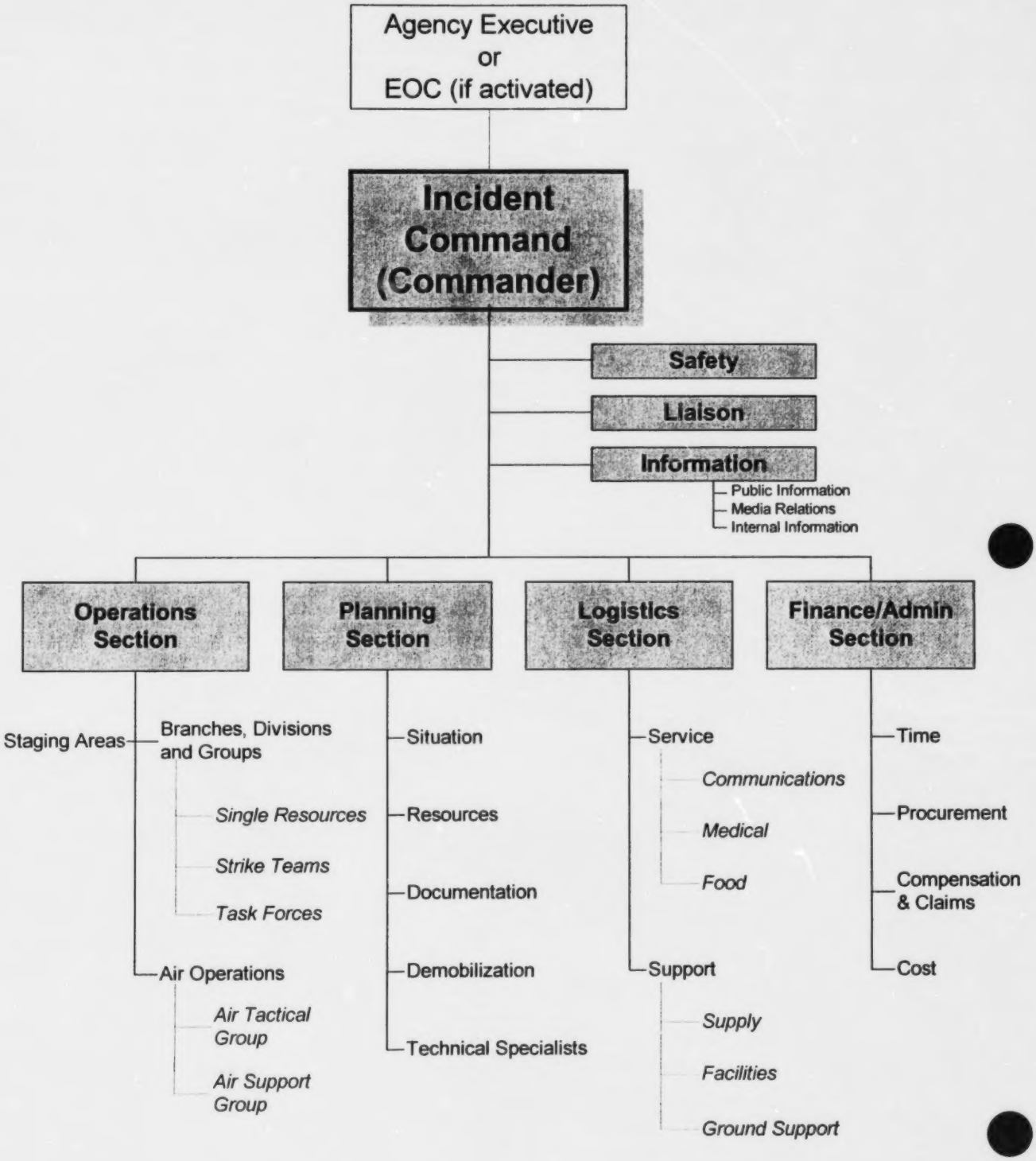
Other responders such as municipalities, the private sector and the federal government are encouraged to use the Incident Command System (ICS). The ICS is a modular management system that expands or contracts as the incident escalates or de-escalates incorporating and using relevant ICS components and principles. Figure 3-1 illustrates a fully activated response organization at the Site Level.

## 3.2 Incident Command

The Site Level uses the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS provides for a modular management structure for incident level response. Every incident has single command or unified command. The system provides for the transfer of command to take place one or more times during the course of an incident.

Command at all times is responsible for the overall direction and coordination of all activities at the incident site. ICS *Operational Guidelines* (reference document) are used by command (Incident Commander) or unified command to determine the structure and management of the response.

**Figure 3-1 Site Incident Command Organization**



Incident Commanders ensure that all ICS personnel in supervisory positions follow the following principle:

- No undue risk to the safety of personnel shall be acceptable where there is no possibility to save lives.

The Incident Commander shall evaluate the risk to personnel with respect to the purpose and potential results of their actions in each situation. In situations where the risk to personnel is excessive, as outlined in Section 4-1.2, activities shall be limited to defensive and protective operations.

## 3.3 Single and Unified Command

The first responder on the scene of an incident assumes command. Transfer of command to the agency having jurisdiction usually takes place early in the response. Incident Commanders may have one or more deputies. Deputy Incident Commanders should have the same qualifications as an Incident Commander and may work directly with the Incident Commander, serve as relief Incident Commander, or perform certain assigned tasks.

In an incident within a single jurisdiction where the nature of the incident is primarily a responsibility of one agency, a Deputy Incident Commander may be from the same agency. In a multi-jurisdictional incident, or one that may become so, an individual from another agency may fill the Deputy Incident Commander role. More than one deputy could be involved.

Another method of organizing for multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency situations is unified command. Unified command is an important way to improve multi-jurisdictional/multi-agency incident management. It provides guidelines for agencies with legal, geographic and functional responsibilities to work together to direct and control a coordinated response.

The selection of participants within a unified command structure depends upon:

- the location of the incident,
- the geographical and administrative jurisdictions involved, and
- the kind of incident.

*Operational Guidelines* for the Site provide more detail on unified command.

## 3.4 Single and Unified Command Differences

In a single command structure, a single Incident Commander is solely responsible to establish objectives and overall management strategy for the incident. The Incident Commander is directly responsible for ensuring that all functions and actions are directed toward accomplishing the strategy. The implementation of the incident action plan is the responsibility of a single Operations Section Chief, if appointed, who reports directly to the Incident Commander. The Operations Section Chief is responsible for all tactical activities used to achieve the objectives.

In unified command, the individuals designated by their jurisdictions jointly determine objectives and strategies. As in a single command structure, a single Operations Section Chief implements the incident action plan. Selection of this person is made by mutual agreement of the unified command. This may be done on the basis of greatest jurisdictional involvement, number of resources involved, by existing plan or statutory authority, or by mutual knowledge of an individual's qualifications.

## 3.5 Organization of Site Level

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of each functional element of site response.

There are two additional management structures that may be applied in very large, complex or widespread emergencies. These are the Incident Complex and

Area Command. Both response organizations are detailed in the Site *Operational Guidelines*.

**Agency Executive:**
The Agency Executive or policy group is composed of the administrator, chief executive officer or designate of the agency or jurisdictional authority.

The Agency Executive provides policy direction and delegates authority, either verbally or in writing, to the Incident Commander.

The Agency Executive is not located at the scene of the incident, but is able to communicate with the Incident Commander as necessary. Depending on the nature of the incident or level of the overall emergency, the Executive could function from the agency or jurisdiction's offices or from an Emergency Operations Centre.

**Incident Commander:**
(Unified Command)
An Incident Commander is responsible for all direction at the site. This includes overall responsibility for the safety and health of all personnel and for other persons operating within the Incident Command System.

Incident Commanders establish a command structure that meets the particular needs of each situation. They determine the overall organization to be used, and summon and assign adequate resources to deal with the situations.

They evaluate response, progress, and change strategy as appropriate, and bring incidents to a close.

The Incident Commander may request that the Site Support Level be activated to provide resources and direction to site activities. The *Operational Guidelines* adopted by agencies define the scope of authority to be delegated at each level of the organization.

**Supervisory Personnel:**
The following positions in Figure 3-2 listed under Managerial Level are Supervisory Personnel. They are responsible for activities within their span of control, including responsibility for the safety and health of personnel and other authorized persons within their designated geographic areas or functions.

Supervisory Personnel should be alert to conditions and actions that create a hazard within their span of control. All Supervisory Personnel have the authority and responsibility to take immediate action to correct imminent hazards and to advise their immediate supervisor regarding these actions.

Supervisory Personnel coordinate their activities with other supervisory personnel at the same level and provide direction to personnel at a lower level or within their span of control through the chain of command.

Where conflicting direction or orders are received at any level of BCERMS, the individual receiving the conflicting direction or order informs the individual giving the order that a conflict exists. If the conflicting order must be carried out, the individual giving the conflicting order must inform the individual who provided the initial order.

**Figure 3-2 Organization Structure Managerial Level**
**(Supervisory Personnel)**

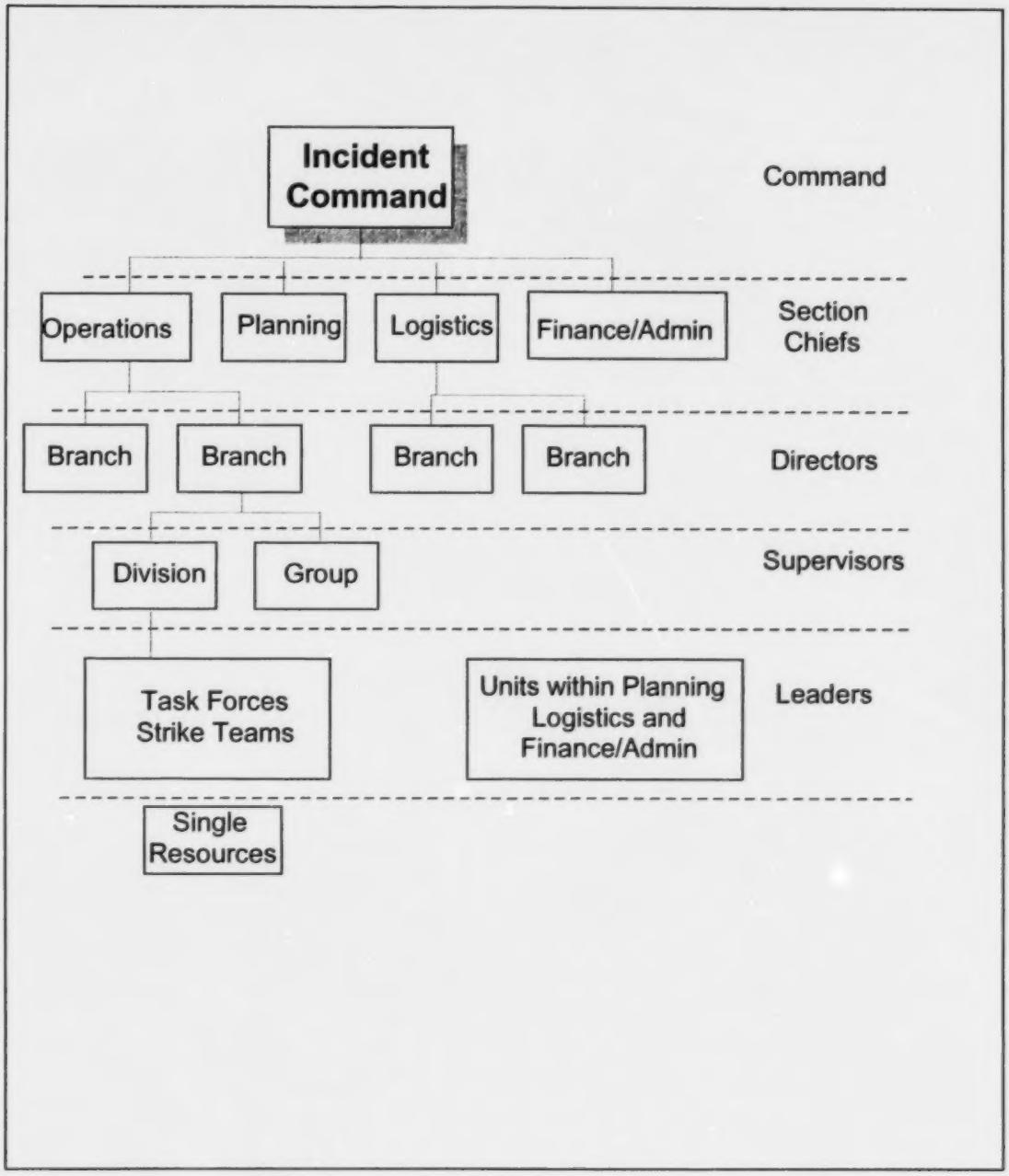
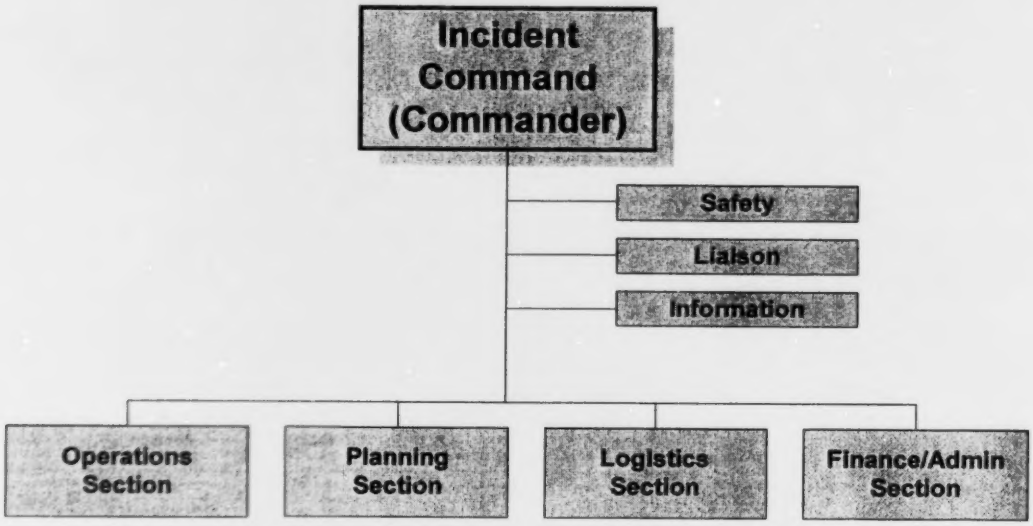


**Figure 3-3 Incident Command (Commander)**




**Command Staff:**
The following three command staff positions directly support the Commander:

- Safety Officer,
- Liaison Officer, and
- Information Officer.

On large or complex incidents Command Staff may need assistants to help manage their workloads.

**Safety Officer:**
The Safety Officer assesses hazardous and unsafe situations and develops measures for assuring personnel safety. The Safety Officer has emergency authority to stop and/or prevent unsafe acts. In a single or unified command, one Safety Officer is designated.

**Liaison Officer:**
The Liaison Officer is the point of contact for representatives from involved agencies other than the Incident Commander's own agency.

In single or unified command, these agency representatives from assisting or cooperating agencies coordinate through the Liaison Officer.

Agency representatives assigned to an incident represent the interests of their agencies and have the authority to decide and commit on all matters for their agencies.

Assisting agencies provide direct tactical resources to the incident. Supporting agencies provide service and support activities for the incident.

**Information Officer:**
The Information Officer develops accurate and complete information regarding incident cause, size, current situation, resource commitments, and other matters of general interest.

The Information Officer is the point of contact for the media and Information Officers from other agencies that desire information directly from the incident.

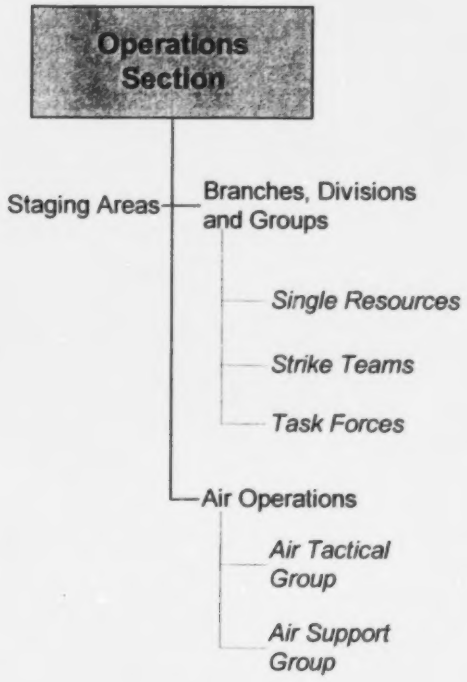
In either a single or unified command structure, the Incident Commander(s) designates only one Information Officer, although he/she may have assistants.

The Information Officer must have the prior approval of the Incident Commander for the release of any information.

## 3.6 Incident Operations

There are many ways in which incident tactical operations may be organized and managed. These methods are detailed in the Site *Operational Guidelines* for the Site Level. The specific methods selected will depend on the type of incident, the agencies and resources involved, and the selected objectives and strategies.

**Figure 3-4 Operations Section**




**Operations Section:**
The Operations Section Chief is responsible for the direct management of all incident tactical activities. This Section Chief assists in the development of the incident action plan. They may have one or more Deputies assigned; Deputies must be as qualified as the Operations Section Chief.

**Branches, Divisions, Teams, Groups:**
Branches, Divisions, Teams, or Groups are established at an incident when the number of resources presents problems with the span of control. Divisions are established to divide an incident into geographical areas of operation.

Groups are established to divide the incident response into functional areas of operation. Divisions and Groups are at the same level in ICS and may be used in combination.

Branches are organized when the number of Groups and Divisions working under the Operations Section Chief exceeds the optimum span of control.

Branches may be either geographical or functional and the supervisory position is termed Director.

**Staging Areas:**
Staging Areas are locations designated by the Operations Section Chief within the incident area that are used to temporarily locate resources available for tactical assignments. All Staging Areas are assigned a Staging Area Manager to coordinate staging activities and request logistical support (e.g., food, fuel, sanitation) from Logistics.

**Air Operations:**
The Operations Section Chief may establish an Air Operations Branch, if required. The size, organization, and use of the Air Operations Branch depends primarily upon the nature of the incident and the availability of aircraft. The Site *Level Operational Guidelines* contain methods for organizing Air Operations.

Other special operations, such as marine, may be organized similarly to air operations.

## 3.7 Incident Planning

The Planning Section is responsible for collecting, evaluating, disseminating and using information about the incident. The Section maintains information on the current and forecasted situation, and on the status of resources assigned to the incident. Planning is also responsible for preparing and documenting incident action plans and incident maps.

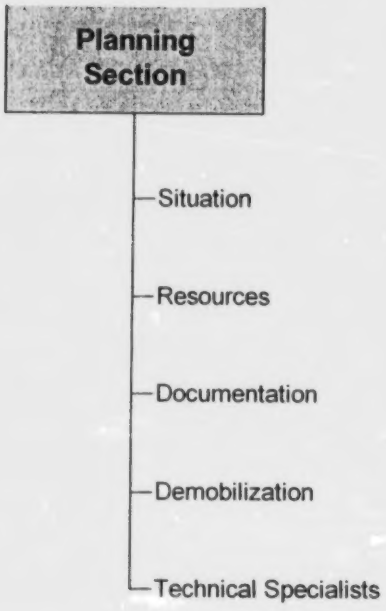
The Section may be divided into four elements, and may have a number of technical specialists to assist in evaluating the situation and suggesting and planning future strategic and tactical operations. Risk management will be a consideration in all planning activities.

## Planning Section

The Planning Section Chief oversees the gathering and analysis of all data regarding incident operations and assigned resources, developing alternatives for tactical operations, conducting planning meetings and preparing the incident action plan for each operational period.

The Planning Section Chief is from the agency with primary incident responsibility or jurisdiction. This Section Chief may have one or more Deputies from other involved agencies.

**Figure 3-5 Planning Section**




**Situation:**
The Situation Unit collects and organizes information, prepares summaries, and develops projections and forecasts of future events related to the incident.

The unit prepares maps, intelligence and other information for use in the incident action planning process.

This unit may use field observers to collect accurate information.

**Resources:**
The Resources Unit ensures that all assigned personnel and resources are checked in and are tracked and accounted for at the incident.

**Documentation:**
The Documentation Unit maintains accurate and complete files, and provides photocopy services to incident personnel.

The documents are filed, maintained and stored for legal, analytical and historical purposes.

**Demobilization:**
The Demobilization Unit develops the Incident Demobilization Plan. The plan will include specific demobilization instructions for both human and physical resources.

The Demobilization Plan must take into account the need for Critical Incident Stress debriefing.

**Technical Specialists:**
Technical Specialists are personnel with special skills for use anywhere within the ICS organization and are assigned to the Planning Section.

Technical Specialists are often certified in their field or profession, and are activated only when needed.

At the discretion of the Planning Section Chief, Technical Specialists may report to an existing unit, or may form a separate unit within the Planning Section, depending on the needs of the incident. Technical Specialists may also be reassigned to other parts of the organization, such as Operations, to provide advice or implement tactical activities.

The following are some examples of Technical Specialists:

- Meteorologist,
- Hydrologist,
- Fire Behaviour, and
- Structural Engineer.

While the incident itself will dictate the types of specialists required, a risk management specialist should always be considered, even if only consulted verbally by phone.

## 3.8 Site Logistics

The Logistics Section is responsible for providing all support needs to the incident (except aircraft), including resources from off-site locations. It also provides communications, medical and food services, facilities, ground transportation, supplies, equipment, fuel and maintenance.

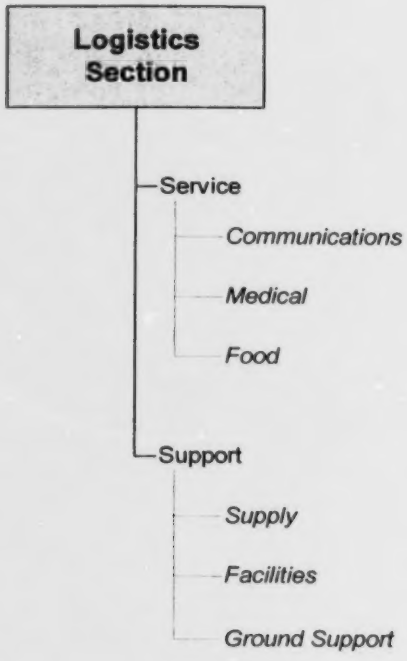
A Logistics Section Chief, who may have a deputy, manages the Section. When a Logistics Section is required on an incident, the following elements may be established as the need requires. In a very large incident when all of these units are activated, they are divided into two branches:

**Service Branch:**
- Communications Unit,
- Medical Unit, and
- Food Unit.

**Support Branch:**
- Supply Unit,
- Facilities Unit, and
- Ground Support Unit.

The Service Branch performs tasks to sustain the response organization, such as communications and food. The Support Branch provides material goods, facilities, equipment, and ground transportation. Logistics also plays a key role in responder rehabilitation.

**Figure 3-6 Logistics Section**




## Logistics Section

The Logistics Section Chief, a member of the general staff, is responsible for providing facilities, services, and material in support of the incident. The Logistics Chief participates in developing and implementing the incident action plan and activates and supervises the branches and functions within the Logistics Section.

The Logistics Section Chief ensures that all resource, service and support requests are considered and filled promptly to support the incident action plan.

**Communications:**
The Communications Unit develops plans to make the most effective use of incident assigned communications equipment and facilities.

The Communications Unit has a major responsibility for planning and coordinating effective communications, due to the potential multi-agency involvement in emergencies.

Specific responsibilities:

- the unit installs and tests all communications equipment, supervises and operates the Incident Communications Centre,
- distributes and recovers equipment assigned to incident personnel, and
- maintains and repairs communications equipment.

This is especially important in determining required radio nets, establishing frequency assignments, and ensuring that responders make effective use of all assigned communications capability.

**Food:**
The Food Unit determines food and water requirements for all incident personnel. Activities typically include planning menus, ordering food, organizing cooking facilities, cooking, serving, and maintaining the food preparation and serving areas.

On extended incidents, supplying efficient food services is an extremely important support to the operation. The Food Unit anticipates incident needs in terms of both numbers of personnel to be fed, and any special requirements due to the kind or location of the incident. The food supply is for the entire incident including remote locations, personnel who cannot leave tactical assignments, and the Incident Command Post.

**Medical:**
The Medical Unit is responsible for providing medical aid to incident personnel who are injured or become sick. The medical unit develops the Incident Medical Plan.

This unit primarily serves the welfare of responders as opposed to victims.

A medical plan or victims medical services would be developed by the Planning Section and delivered by the Operations Section.

**Supply:**
The Supply Unit orders all off-incident supporting and cooperating resources (including personnel) and all expendable and non-expendable supplies required for incident support.

**Facilities:**
The Facilities Unit establishes, maintains and demobilizes all facilities used in support of incident operations. The unit also provides any facility maintenance and security services required.

The unit establishes the Incident Command Post, Base, and any Camps or other required facilities, as directed by the Incident Commander. The unit also provides and sets up necessary personnel support facilities such as feeding, sleeping, rehabilitation and sanitation areas.

**Ground Support:**
The Ground Support Unit provides transportation services to support incident operations, excluding aircraft provided through the Air Operations Branch. The unit fuels, maintains, and repairs primary tactical equipment, vehicles, and mobile ground support equipment.

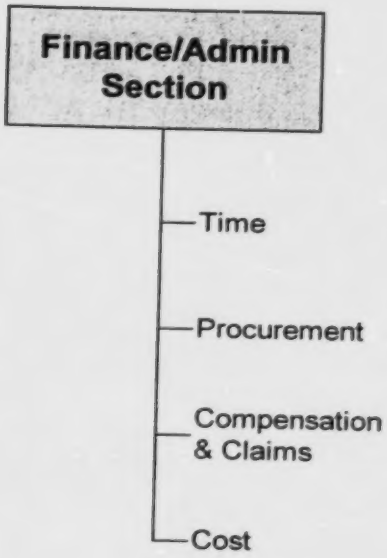
The Ground Support unit develops and implements the incident Traffic Plan, if required. Ground Support provides the Resources Unit in Planning with up-to-date information on the status of transportation vehicles, their locations and capabilities.

## 3.9 Incident Finance/Administration

The Finance/Administration Section is staffed when there is a need for these services. The Finance/ Administration Section may be composed of the following units:

- Time,
- Procurement,
- Compensation & Claims, and
- Cost.

**Figure 3-7 Finance/Administration**




## Finance/Administration

The Finance/Administration Section monitors incident-related costs and administers any necessary procurement contracts.

The Finance/Administration Chief is responsible for all financial and cost aspects of the incident and for supervising members of the Finance/Administration Section. The Chief ensures that all financial records are maintained throughout the event.

The Finance/Administration Section Chief activates units within the section, monitors section activities, and modifies the organization as needed.

**Time:**
The Time Unit records personnel and equipment time and manages commissary operations on large ongoing incidents.

**Procurement:**
The Procurement Unit administers all financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts, rentals, leases and fiscal agreements.

The unit coordinates with local jurisdictions on plans and supply sources, prepares and signs equipment rental agreements, and processes all administrative paper work associated with equipment rental and supply contracts.

Note that certain procurement activities in some agencies will be accomplished through the Supply function in the Logistics Section. A Procurement Unit when organized coordinates among the Ordering Manager (Supply Unit), agency(s) dispatch and all other procurement organizations supporting the incident.

**Compensation & Claims:**
The Compensation & Claims Unit has three distinct purposes:

- tracking incidents which may give rise to a claim under Workers' Compensation legislation,
- tracking incidents which may give rise to a claim under the compensation section of other relevant legislation, and
- tracking situations that may give rise to a claim in negligence for bodily injury and/or property damage.

The Compensation & Claims Unit works closely with the Documentation Unit at the site support level.

The unit maintains logs on the claims, obtains witness statements, documents investigations, and follows agency requirements as applicable. A Claims Management Specialist may be used.

**Cost:**
The Cost Unit provides cost analysis data for the incident, performs cost effectiveness analyses and provides cost estimates and savings recommendations for incident action planning.

## 3.10 Media and Public Relations

### Information Demand

During major emergencies, demand for information is often overwhelming:

- local media require information to provide emergency instructions and situation reports to the public,
- provincial and national media will demand information and will play a role in informing distant relatives of the situation,
- the distribution of public information, alerts and warning may be necessary, and
- a flood of public calls may also result.

It is therefore imperative that all emergency public information activities be coordinated with all other stakeholders.

### Information Officer

Information Officer(s) play a vital role at all BCERMS levels by managing and coordinating pubic and media information needs.

The Commander or Director of an EOC must authorize the release of all information.

Information Officer activities will concentrate their efforts on vital life safety information first and general emergency information second.

Where an event requires more than one Information Officer, the EOC Commander or Director will appoint a **Senior Information Officer**. The Senior Information Officer will be responsible for the overall coordination of information needs.

Where the demand for information requires, the Information Officer function may be organized into a separate section and units. Generally, the information demands at the site support level will not require the establishment of an information section.

Every effort should be made to coordinate the release of information with other EOCs, other BCERMS levels, local authorities and non-government agencies. Multiple sources of information may confuse the pubic and could lead to serious life-threatening consequences.

When an event has province-wide implications and attracts extensive political, public or media attention, the PECC information Officer, in accordance with the direction of the CCG will direct the overall provincial emergency pubic information response at all provincial levels.

The emergency pubic information response will be in accordance with the operational guidelines set out within the *Emergency Public Information Plan.*

During Response Level 2 and 3 operations, the Information Officer will coordinate with the Information Office at the PECC for the release of all public information.

# 4.0 Support Levels

- **Site Support**
- **Provincial Regional Coordination**
- **Provincial Central Coordination**

## 4.1 Introduction to Site Support and Emergency Operations Centres

The basic role of jurisdictions and organizations at the Site Support Level is to manage and coordinate the overall emergency response and recovery activities within their geographical or functional jurisdiction.

For example, an Incident Commander at a site may request the local authority to establish an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) when he/she requires support such as additional or extraordinary resources, assistance with media relations, or operations such as evacuations.

Any organization may choose to establish its own Emergency Operations Centre in support of a site level response. This includes local authority, provincial authorities, Crown agencies or non-government agencies.

An EOC established by Emergency Social Services (ESS) is a prime example. While this centre works very closely with other site support centres, it reports to and receives direction from within its own organizational structure, generally at the regional level.

Incident Commanders report to their agency executive or to the EOC Director. At the site support level, BCERMS principles are applied and there are five primary functions:

- Management,
- Operations,
- Planning,
- Logistics, and
- Finance/Administration.

The EOC Director may also assign the following additional management staff positions:

- Risk Management Officer,
- Information Officer, and
- Liaison Officer.

The staff member assigned responsibility for supervising each function has the title of Chief of that functional section, i.e., Chief of Plans, Chief of Operations or Chief of Logistics.

Emergency response plans may call for the establishment of a policy group consisting of elected officials and/or senior administrators. The policy group provides direction to the EOC Director.

Some regional districts or local authorities (that have been appropriately authorized under *the Emergency Program Act*) have agreed to coordinate their emergency response activities. As a consequence, a joint Emergency Operations Centre may be established.

An EOC may be organized and operated by:

- local authorities including regional districts,
- local authorities' departments,
- provincial ministries/Crown corporations,
- federal government departments,
- private industry,
- First Nations, or
- non-government agencies.

More than one EOC may be activated to support site activities. If more than one EOC is activated, one of the following should occur:

- One EOC should be assigned primary responsibility for managing the overall site support activities. All other EOCs perform a support function.
- Where multiple EOCs are established, a Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) should be established.

In accordance with emergency response plans, an Incident Commander or senior official may establish a site support EOC. An EOC serves as the central point for:

- decision-making in support of site and off-site needs,
- coordination of all the jurisdiction's emergency operations, information gathering and dissemination, and
- coordination with other jurisdictions and the Provincial Regional Coordination Level of BCERMS.

**Figure 4-1 Site Support EOC Chart**

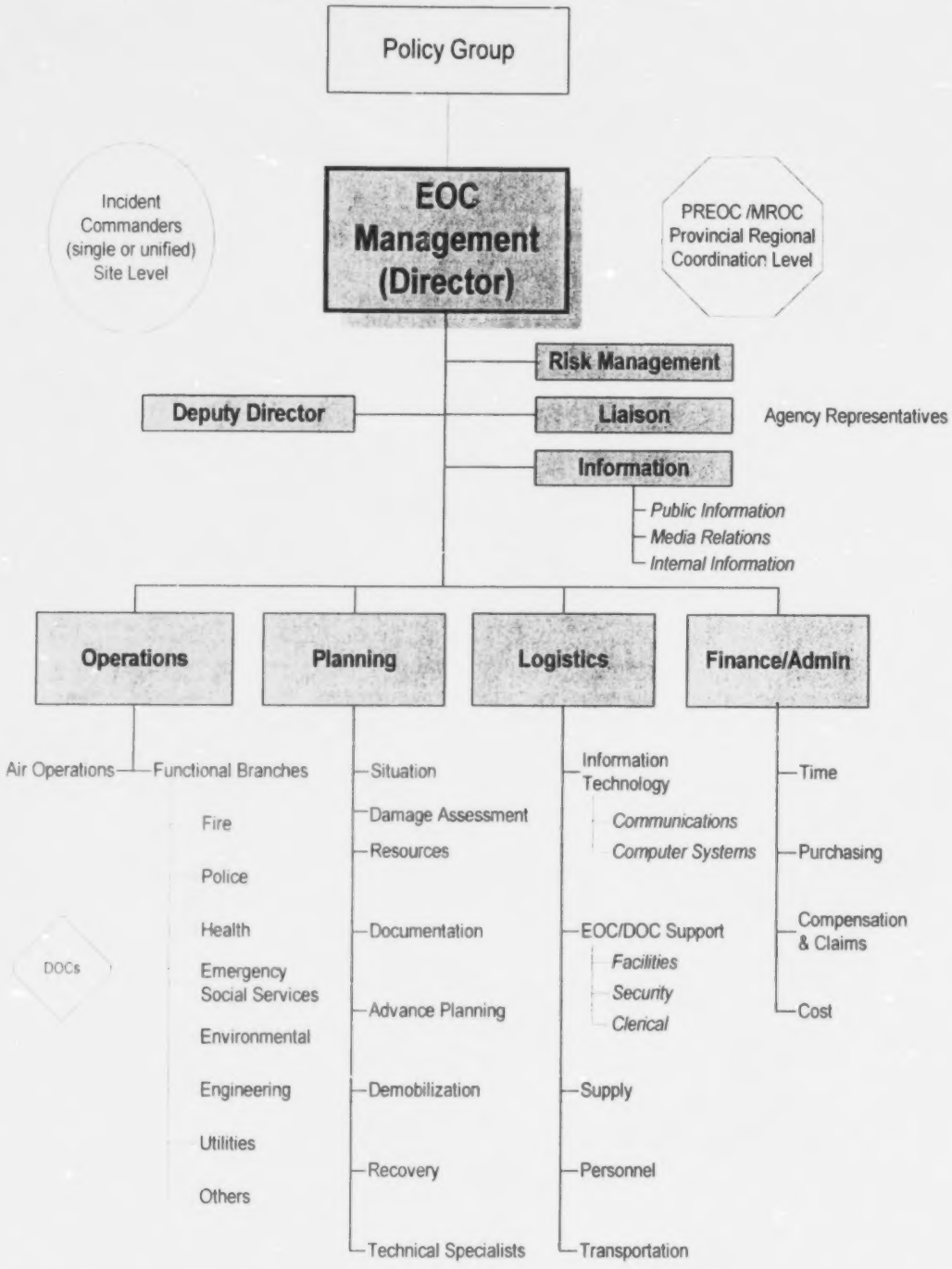



Figure 4-1 illustrates a fully activated EOC organization at the Site Support Level.

## 4.2 Introduction to Provincial Regional Coordination

There are two types of Provincial Regional Coordination:

- a Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC) manages the overall provincial emergency support for response and recovery activities within a geographic region, and
- a Ministry Regional Operations Centre (MROC) manages support for the ministry's regional emergency response.

MROCs coordinate their activities and resource needs with other provincial response and support agencies through their representative in the appropriate functional branch of the PREOC.

A PREOC may be used to coordinate or direct local authority and private sector resources in a provincially declared state of emergency.

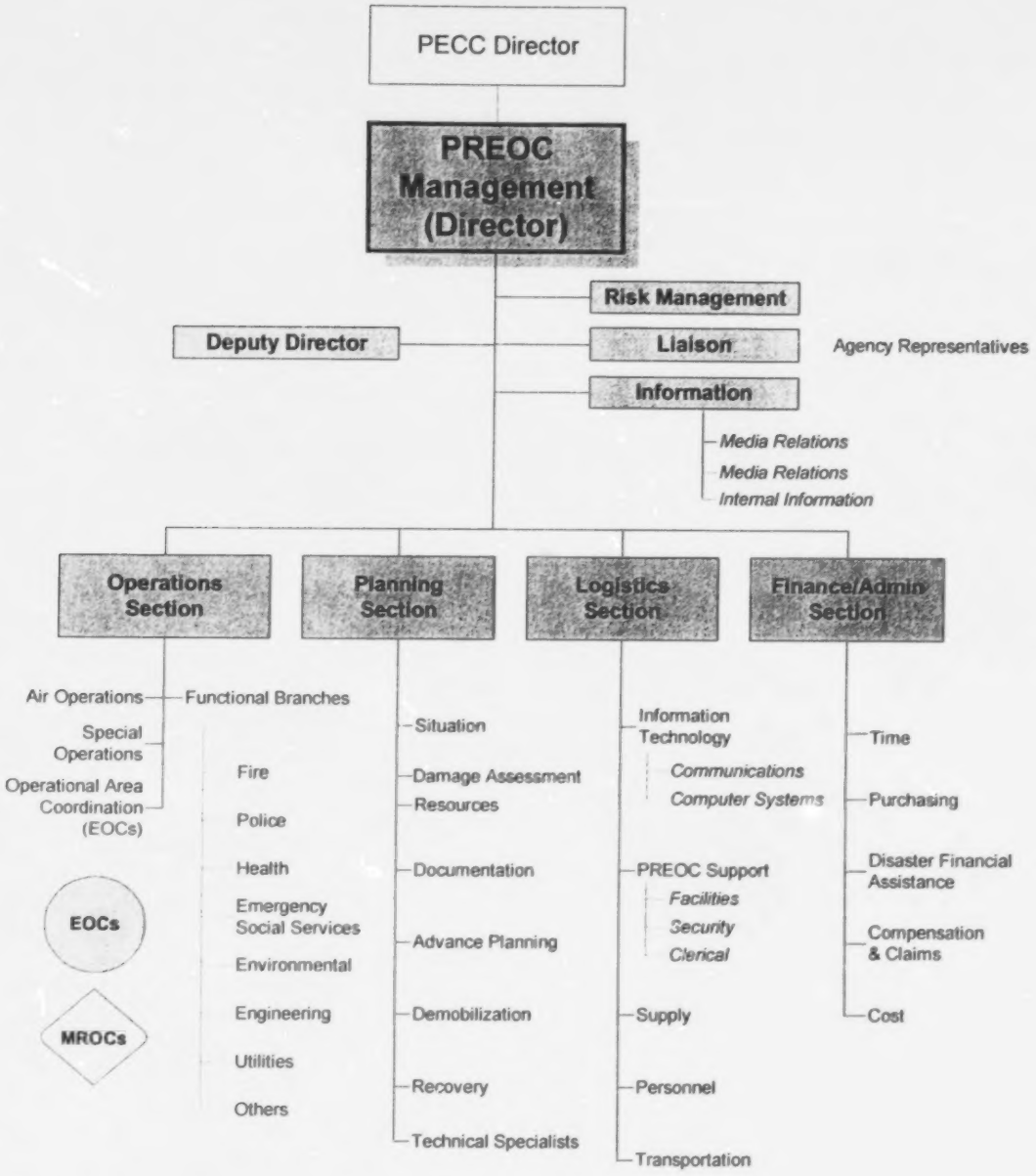
In principle, a PREOC will always be activated whenever there is a potential for regional support or a need to keep the provincial government informed. Any one of the following may activate a PREOC:

- local authority may request activation,
- persons named in the emergency plan of the key ministry for the hazard,
- Director of the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC),
- Director of the Provincial Emergency Program, or
- Co-chair of the Central Coordination Group.

The same BCERMS primary functions apply at the PREOC/MROC level:

- Management,
- Operations,
- Planning,
- Logistics, and
- Finance/Administration.

## Figure 4-2 Provincial Regional PREOC Chart



## 4.3 Introduction to the Provincial Central Coordination Level

There are two types of Provincial Central Coordination:

- The Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) directs and coordinates the overall emergency response, recovery and support activities of the provincial government, as required by the *Emergency Program Act* of 1993.
- Ministry or corporate EOCs may be established to manage their organizational-specific emergency response activities.

Both types of central coordination provide direction and resources in support of regional emergency coordination operations.

**Provincial central policy direction** is significantly more structured than at any other level within BCERMS.

Primary policy direction to the PECC is provided by the Central Coordination Group (CCG). The CCG is composed of senior ministry/agency representatives and is responsible for directing the overall provincial government response province-wide. The CCG will in turn take direction from the key minister and/or an ad-hoc committee of Cabinet.

The PECC:

- Provides inter-region policy direction and coordination for emergencies involving more than one PREOC.
- Acts as the overall provincial coordination centre in the event of simultaneous multi-region disasters, such as earthquakes, floods or interface fires.
- Provides ongoing inter-agency coordination with Ministry Operations Centres in order to ensure adequate province-wide mobilization and allocation of provincial assets.
- Implements the provincial *Emergency Public Information Plan*.
- Serves as the coordination and communications link with the federal disaster support structure,

working with both the Department of National Defence and Emergency Preparedness Canada.
- In the event of a sudden large-scale emergency, the PECC coordinates all response activities province-wide until the regional PREOCs can be activated.

PECC staffing is initially based in the PEP ECC, augmented by PEP headquarters staff.

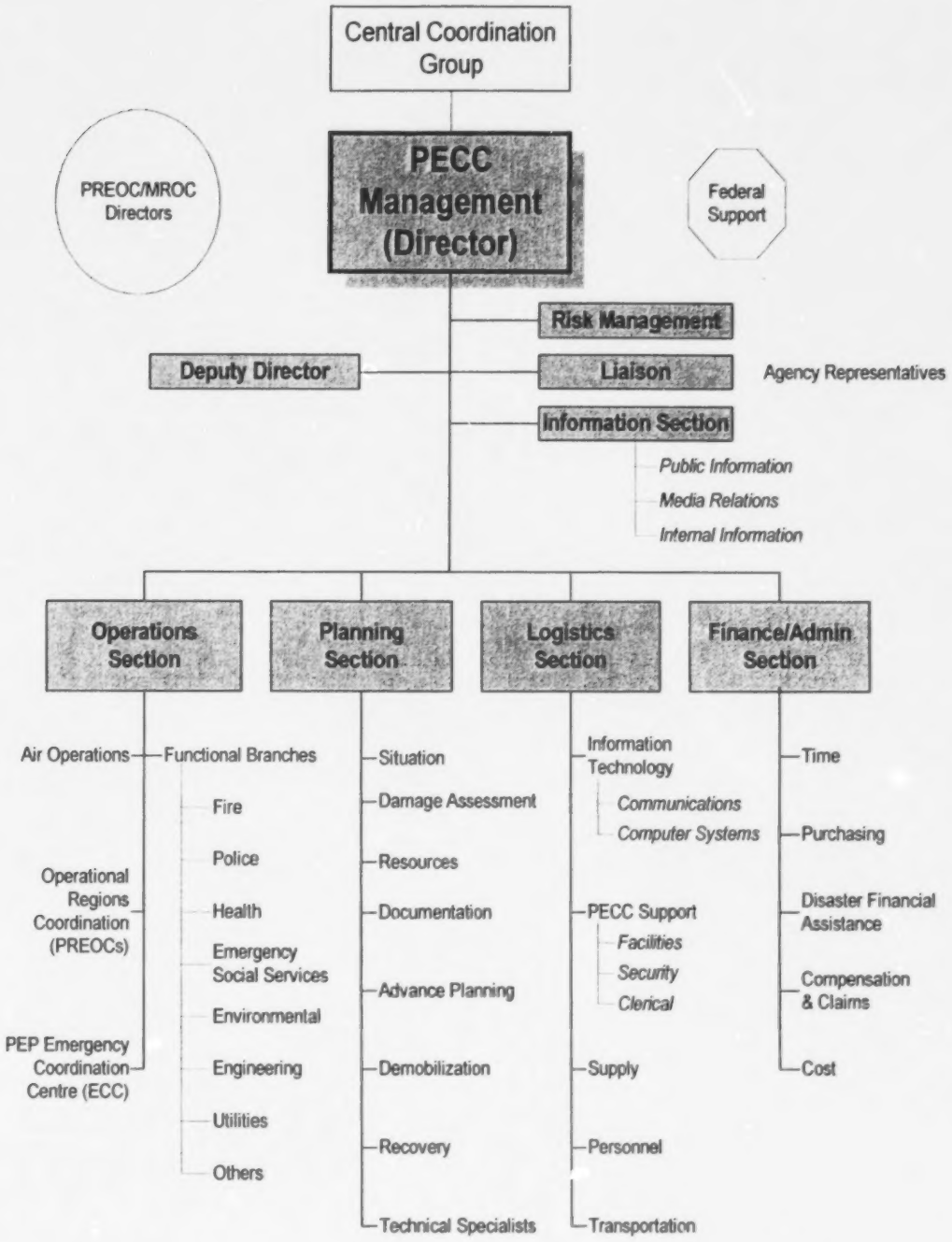
The PECC will be activated:

- in support of any activated PREOC,
- at the direction of the Director of PEP,
- upon the direction of the Co-chair of the CCG, and
- at the request of any key ministry.

The same BCERMS five primary functions apply at the central coordination level as are applied at all other BCERMS levels:

- Management,
- Operations,
- Planning,
- Logistics, and
- Finance/Administration.

## Figure 4-3 Provincial Central Coordination



## 4.4 Policy Direction

The local authority Policy Group, composed of elected officials, gives emergency policy direction to the EOC Director and staff.

### Local Authority

Function of local Policy Group:

- establishes general direction and priorities,
- sets expenditure limits,
- authorizes additional outside support/resources,
- formally requests provincial support,
- provides direction for emergency public information activities,
- a member of the policy group may represent the local authority in making public statements,
- the mayor or chairperson of a regional district may declare a state of local emergency,
- provides policy direction to private sector EOCs by senior company executives or managers, and
- the EOC Director is responsible for interpreting this policy and, in turn, providing response priorities to Incident Commanders, who establish incident objectives and strategies at the site of the incident.

### Provincial Regional

The Director of the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) provides policy direction for the PREOC management team. In turn, when activated, the Central Coordination Group (CCG) provides policy direction to the PECC Director.

### Provincial Central

The Policy Group for the PECC is the Central Coordination Group (CCG). This group provides direction to the Director of the PECC.

- The CCG is composed of senior government and non-government officials selected in accordance with the nature of the emergency.

- The CCG is activated whenever a coordinated government response is required for any emergency.
- The CCG reports to the Attorney General or an ad hoc committee of Cabinet, briefs senior government officials and performs the following activities:

  - apprises the government of the emergency or disaster situation,
  - seeks approval to requests for military, federal, or international assistance,
  - seeks declaration of a **provincial state of emergency** and manages application,
  - manages, in accordance with government objectives, the deployment of provincial, federal and international resources,
  - prepares all requests for advance **federal** disaster assistance funding, and
  - directs provincial emergency public information activities through the PECC Director.

## 4.5 EOC, PREOC and PECC Roles and Responsibilities

One of the important aspects of BCERMS is the commonality of organization, roles, and terminology of the three support levels of the system. This section outlines the roles of the five functions and their elements found at the Site Support Level, Provincial Regional Coordination Level and Provincial Central Level. In this overview, the operations centres for each of the levels will be collectively referred to as "Centre". The role described will apply to any of the three. Where variations occur, these are clearly stated.

## 4.6 Management

Management is responsible for overall emergency direction and coordination.

The management function is responsible for:

- managing the Centre so that multi-agency support is provided to a site or multiple sites,

- interfacing with other agencies requiring information, and
- coordinating with the next senior BCERMS level.

**Director**

The Directors of these Centres:

- have overall management responsibility for coordinating, supporting, and assisting other agencies,
- set priorities for overall response/recovery efforts and ensure that an action plan is developed, monitor all planning, response and recovery actions,
- establish the appropriate staffing level for their Centres and continuously monitor organizational effectiveness, and
- take direction from the appropriate policy group.

**Deputy Director**

A Deputy Director assumes the role of Director whenever the Director is absent from the Centre.

The Deputy may undertake special assignments at the request of the Director.

The Deputy is responsible for ensuring that the information flow within the Centre is efficient and accurate and that resource requests are prioritized and tracked.

**Liaison Officer**

Liaison Officers are the point of contact for, and interaction with, representatives from agencies and jurisdictions arriving at the Centres. This also includes liaison with other Centres at the same level, and organizations not represented there.

**Information Officer**

Information Officers play a critical role in the maintenance of public confidence.

All site support-level information activities must be coordinated with site level, the provincial level,

regional level and central level information officers. In addition, the Information Officer needs to coordinate activities with other Information Officers in activated EOCs and non-government agencies.

The number of resources committed to the Information Officer function at each level is directly dependent upon the nature and extent of the disaster. In a large disaster which extends over a period of time, the Information Officer function, particularly at the provincial and central levels, may be organized into sections or units.

The Information Officer function is part of the command staff and reports to the Director.

Responsibilities:

- Provides accurate and timely information to the public, media and emergency staff,
- ***Media Relations:*** serves as the point of contact for all media and other agencies that seek information,
- Prepares, manages and coordinates with other levels and centres, all media releases and press conferences,
- ***Media Monitoring and Rumour Control:*** continuously reviews media reports and other information sources for accuracy and rumours,
- ***Public Information:*** ensures that the public within the affected area receive complete, accurate, and consistent information about life safety procedures, public health advisories, relief and assistance programs and other vital information,
- ***Public Alert/Warning:*** the Information Officer, section or unit, under the direction of the Director, manages the distribution of public alert, public warnings and all-clear messages,
- Distributes the public alert messages that may involve door-to-door canvassing, radio and TV broadcasts, web sites, e-mail distribution lists, etc.,
- ***Internal Information:*** keeps all agencies represented in the Centre, DOCs and MROCs informed of general information,

- Develops orientation and/or demobilization information packages as required,
- ***Public Education Preparedness and Recovery:*** manages the distribution of publications, and arranges for the conduct of public meetings and local authority workshops,
- ***Coordination Emergency Communications Planning:*** develops an event-specific plan to coordinate public communications with local authorities/other agencies and their media spokespersons,
- ***Toll-free Public Information Phone Services:*** establishes and manages toll-free public information phone services, providing multilingual services where appropriate,
- ***Elected Officials:*** in order to maintain public confidence it is critical that elected officials are visible. Arranges media coverage of event tours and press conferences.

### Risk Management Officer

The Risk Management Officer ensures that the concepts of risk management are applied throughout the organization and the operations being coordinated. The Risk Management Officer is responsible for assessing hazardous and unsafe situations. She/he develops measures for assuring personnel safety and security throughout the Centre's area of responsibility and coordinates safety policy and actions with supported levels (i.e., PREOC Risk Management coordinates with EOC(s) Risk Management Officers who, in turn, coordinate with their respective sites).

The Risk Management Officer has the authority to halt or modify any and all unsafe conditions, notifying a centre director of actions taken.

## 4.7 Operations Section

The Operations Section coordinates all jurisdictional operations in support of the overall emergency response effort through implementation of the centre's action plan.

The Operations Section has a number of functions:

- provides situation and resources information to the Planning Section,
- coordinates aviation services and resources, if more than one site, area or region, as the case may be, is using aircraft,
- coordinates the activities or the functional branches and agencies assigned to operations, and
- implements a Centre's action plan.

### Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief manages and coordinates the activities noted above. The Chief establishes the appropriate level of organization and staffing within the section. He/she reports to the Director on all matters pertaining to section activities.

### Functional Branches

Depending upon the nature of the emergency, the Operations Section will be organized into a number of functional branches, each led by a **Coordinator**.

A Deputy Operations Section Chief may be appointed to supervise these branches when the span of control exceeds five or six.

In some circumstances there is no need to combine departments and agencies into functional branches. In these cases the Operations Section may be organized by agency or department rather than function.

### Operational Area Coordinator

When multiple emergency operations centres or department operations centres are reporting to one PREOC, the Operations Chief will designate an Operational Area Coordinator to act as the single receiving point for support and resources requests.

When the span of control of an Operational Area Coordinator exceeds six, or when the workload exceeds the capacity of one person, a second or third

Operational Area Coordinator would be assigned. When multiple Operational Area Coordinators are required each will be assigned responsibility for specific site support locations.

### PECC/PREOC Operations Centre Representative

To function efficiently, the PECC/PREOC must receive timely and accurate information from the site support level and other ministry or agency operations centres. In the early stages of an emergency, EOCs are overwhelmed with demands and the transmittal of information to the next level may be delayed.

The PECC/PREOC Director may assign a PECC or PREOC representative to attend and work directly from a site support EOC, or ministry or agency central or regional operations centre.

The PECC/PREOC representative will be responsible for gathering and transmitting information back to the PECC/PREOC in a timely manner. The representative will not assume any other function within the operations centre.

For example: representatives would be assigned to a local government EOC, a central or regional fire control centre or a military command post to facilitate the timely sharing of information.

### Optional Functional Branches

The Director, in consultation with the agency representative, will designate a Coordinator responsible for the activities of the specific functional branch.

### Air Operations Branch

The Air Operations Branch is responsible for managing provincial regional air resources, including obtaining additional aviation resources.

The Air Operations Branch works with other agencies to facilitate the movement of response teams, evacuees, patients, materiel, and cargo. The Ministry of Forests manages air operations at the PREOC and

PECC levels. In a large emergency where military support is being provided, a joint military, civilian air operation coordination group will be established.

**Fire Branch**

The Fire Branch implements the objectives of the centre's action plan assigned to the Fire Branch. The primary role is to help preserve property and life through the control of fire and hazardous materials and assist with the rescue of people.

Major responsibilities:

- fire suppression,
- rescue and extrication,
- initial response to emergencies involving dangerous goods, and
- medical first aid.

The Fire Branch arranges for resources for fire suppression and hazardous materials (HAZMAT) control operations. (Note that this does not imply that fire services will physically control on-site HAZMAT – it does mean that the Fire Branch will coordinate this function.) The branch requests available mutual aid resources.

The Fire Branch also coordinates the mobilization and transportation of all local and outside fire resources through the Logistics Section.

**Health Branch**

The Health Branch coordinates a number of emergency health and medical services throughout the jurisdictional area. The branch may comprise:

- health inspection,
- public health nursing,
- community care facilities licensing,
- nutrition,
- continuing care,
- mental health,
- ambulance services, and
- alcohol and drug programs.

The Health Branch Director has responsibilities at both the provincial and municipal levels in all matters relating to the health and well being of victims and survivors.

Responsibilities:

- provides public health advice, assistance, direction and supervision,
- monitors community health impacts, including food and water quality,
- assists hospitals with provision of health services,
- provides care/monitoring of discharged patients,
- supports and assists in major evacuations and patient relocations,
- provides support and information to operators of community and residential care facilities and monitors health and safety of residents,
- assists ESS with the health functions of reception centres for victims and survivors,
- provides critical incident stress staff debriefing services for all disciplines and programs as required,
- provides service to people in the community with mental illness and physical disabilities,
- manages and treats casualties transported to hospital,
- assists hospitals with staffing and patient distribution,
- provides pre-hospital care ambulance services of triage, treatment, transport, and
- keeps hospitals informed of the number of cases to expect.

The Health Branch coordinates the movement of emergency hospitals, advanced treatment centres, and casualty collection units supplied by Health Canada and managed by the province on their behalf.

**Police Branch**

The Police Branch coordinates all police and security services and implements activities required by the action plan.

This branch has the basic duty to preserve and protect life.

Major responsibilities are to:

- protect life,
- protect property,
- prevent crime,
- detect crime and apprehend criminals,
- control traffic,
- care for the dead (assist the Coroner), and
- manage evacuation operations.

**Emergency Social Services**

The Emergency Social Services (ESS) Branch contains the volunteer supported program that responds to the essential needs of individuals who have experienced an emergency or disaster.

ESS provides food, clothing, lodging, helps reunite families and friends, provides emotional support for victims, survivors and responders to an event.

ESS responsibilities:

- provide food, clothing, and temporary housing for those in need,
- provide registration and inquiry services to locate and reunite families,
- refer individuals to financial assistance if required,
- provide counselling, personal or referral services, and
- provide clothing, feeding, and temporary housing for emergency workers.

**Environmental Branch**

The Environmental Branch coordinates environmental emergency services. Specifically, the Branch assists and supports response during incidents such as:

- hazardous spills,
- waste disposal, and
- dam failure.

This branch coordinates response activities with regional, provincial, federal environmental services and private industry.

**Engineering Branch**

This branch maintains the public facilities and infrastructure needed by victims, survivors and responders.

Responsibilities:

- maintains public facilities and infrastructure,
- protects the environment,
- preserves the capital assets of the city,
- assists the police with traffic control,
- coordinates engineering services,
- liaises and assists utility companies in emergency restoration of their systems,
- maintains emergency traffic routes,
- provides personnel for operations as requested by Director, and
- ensures facilities are safe and operable.

The Engineering Branch assists other Operations Section Branches by coordinating the provision of heavy equipment and operators, as necessary. This unit provides emergency construction and repair services.

**Utilities Branch**

The Utilities Branch assesses the status of utilities, and provides periodic utility status reports, as required. This function coordinates the restoration of damaged utilities with utility representatives.

**Other Functional Branches**

Other Functional Branches may be set up to organize related agencies' activities as needed. If possible, the role and responsibilities of these other functional branches should be defined in advance.

## 4.8 Planning Section

The Planning Section is responsible for both advanced and recovery planning, documentation, resources status and demobilization planning.

The section:

- collects, evaluates, validates and disseminates information,
- assesses damage in order to facilitate the deployment of resources,
- tracks, priorizes and assigns all requests for resources,
- coordinates the development of strategic objectives both within the Emergency Operations Centre and in consultation with site support EOCs or DOCs, and
- develops an operational period specific work action plan for the approval of the Director.

### Planning Section Chief

The Planning Section Chief has responsibility for organizing and managing the section. The section may be organized around the following functional activities:

- situation,
- damage assessment,
- resources,
- documentation,
- advance planning,
- recovery,
- technical specialists, and
- demobilization.

The Planning Section facilitates:

- planning meetings,
- overseeing advance and recovery planning,
- ensuring technical specialist services are available to the various centre sections, and
- informing the centre director of significant issues.

Risk management considerations are particularly critical at the planning stage, and the Risk Management Officer should be involved in planning.

**Situation Unit**

The Situation Unit has overall responsibility for collecting, organizing, validating and analyzing

information from all sources. The primary sources of information are the Emergency Operations Centres, Department Operations Centres. Ministry Regional Operations Centres and the media.

The Situation Unit:

- posts the priorities and critical information on status boards,
- prepares Situation Reports (SITREPs) on a regular basis, and
- prepares action plans for each operational period, based on objectives developed by each section.

**Damage Assessment Unit**

The Damage Assessment Unit is particularly vital in a sudden unexpected emergency and may be created separate from, but in direct support of, the Situation Unit. A rapid estimate of damage is required to determine resource deployment priorities and in the development of objectives, strategies and action plans. Rapid damage assessment of transportation routes, along with an assessment of repair time and/or the availability of alternate routes is particularly critical.

Damage assessment must commence immediately following an event and should be one of the first functional activities assigned immediately following activation. The unit is responsible for gaining timely access to reports from other emergency operations centres at all levels.

The media reports may be the most immediate source of information. Field observation teams may also be assigned at any or all support levels.

**Resources Unit**

The Resources Unit coordinates with other elements of the centre operations, planning and logistics sections to capture and maintain resource status information, utilizing either a manual or automated resource tracking process.

That unit also develops and maintains resource status boards or a database and makes information available to all centre staff.

Responsibility for tracking aircraft resources is managed through the Air Operations Branch in the Operations Section.

**Documentation Unit**

The Documentation Unit collects, organizes and files all completed event or disaster-related forms, including all centre position logs, situation status reports, action plans, and any other related information. This information may be valuable in preserving legal remedies involving any future litigation or investigations.

**Advance Planning Unit**

The Advance Planning Unit:

- develops advance plans consisting of potential response and recovery related issues and activities likely to occur beyond the next operational period,
- considers needs and actions two or three operational periods ahead,
- reviews all available status reports, action plans, and other significant documents,
- determines potential future impacts of the event or emergency, particularly issues that might modify the centre's overall priorities, and
- provides periodic briefings for the centre director and the management team addressing issues that might affect future action.

**Recovery Unit**

The Recovery Unit assesses government, community and individual/family recovery needs as a result of the emergency. The unit identifies immediate steps that can be taken to initiate and speed recovery. The unit anticipates restorative actions required over the long-term to reinstate services and to return the community or government infrastructure to pre-emergency conditions.

**Technical Specialists**

Technical Specialists provide technical observations and recommendations to the centre in specialized areas, as required. These individuals ensure that necessary qualified services and resources are available for the particular event or emergency. The Risk Management Officer in the Command Staff provides specialist risk management advice.

**Demobilization Unit**

The Demobilization Unit develops a Demobilization Plan for the centre based on a review of all pertinent planning documents and status reports. The plan includes specific demobilization or deactivation instructions for all resources. The unit works closely with the Demobilization Units at the next lower BCERMS level.

## 4.9 Logistics Section

The Logistics Section provides facilities, services, personnel, equipment and materials to support operations and the centre. This function obtains the personnel, equipment, support services and systems needed to meet operational or support objectives, including the provision of support to the next lower BCERMS level. Risk management advice may be required in the areas of contracting, rental agreements, leases, indemnities, and insurance.

A Logistics Section Chief manages the Logistics Section. When a Logistics Section is required at a centre, the following units and teams may be established:

- Information Technology:
  - Communications Team
  - Computer Systems Team,
- Centre Support:
  - Facilities
  - Security,
- Clerical,
- Supply ,
- Personnel, and
- Transportation.

**Logistics Section Chief**

The Logistics Section Chief is responsible for providing facilities, services, and materiel to fill resource and support requests from the next lower BCERMS level.

The Logistics Chief:

- develops and implements relevant parts of the centre action plan,
- activates and supervises the units within the Logistics Section, and
- ensures the material, comfort, health and personnel needs of the centre.

The Logistics Section coordinates closely with the Operations and Planning Sections to establish priorities for resource acquisition and allocation. Logistics keeps the centre Director informed of all significant issues relating to the Logistics Section.

**Information Technology Unit (Communications and Computer Systems)**

The Information Technology Unit provides radio, telephone and computer resources and services to centre staff as required. The unit may be divided into two teams as follows:

**Communications Team:**

- oversees the installation of telecommunications resources within the centre,
- ensures that communications links are established with the next higher and lower BCERMS levels,
- establishes the communications (message) centre,

- arranges for sufficient frequencies and phones,
- ensures that there are adequate communications staff available for 24-hour coverage, and
- develops and distributes a Communications Plan that identifies all systems in use and managed by or planned for the centre and lists specific frequencies allotted for the emergency or disaster.

**Computer Systems Team:**

- ensures that centre staff have ready access to computer resources and services,
- facilitates the installation of Internet and e-mail access accounts within the centre,
- ensures that data links are established with the next higher and lower BCERMS levels, and
- determines specific computer requirements for all centre positions.

**Centre Support Unit**

The Centre Support Unit:

- provides clerical, secretarial, facilities, security and runner services to the centre organization (clerical services may include word processing, photocopying, filing, facsimiles, telephone support, and courier services for any or all of the centre functions and elements),
- ensures that adequate essential facilities are provided for the response effort, including securing access to the facilities and providing staff, furniture, supplies, and materials necessary to configure the facilities in a manner adequate to accomplish the mission,
- ensures acquired buildings, building floors, and/or workspaces are returned to their original state when no longer needed,
- determines food and water requirements, menu planning, food ordering, cooking facilities, serving and general maintenance of the centre food and rest areas,
- ensures that the condition of all buildings and other facilities used for the centre are safe,
- monitors operational procedures and activities in the centre to ensure they are being conducted in a safe manner, and

- provides medical aid to centre personnel that become sick or injured.

**Supply Unit**

The Supply Unit locates and organizes the delivery of supplies and materiel not provided through normal mutual aid channels or dispatch centres. The unit also coordinates procurement actions with the Finance/Administration Section.

**Personnel Unit**

The Personnel Unit provides personnel resources as requested in support of the centre and the next lower level; identifies, recruits, and registers volunteers as required; and develops the centre's organization chart.

**Transportation Unit**

The Transportation Unit develops a transportation plan to support the centre or activities in coordination with the Engineering Branch and the Situation Assessment Unit, and arranges for the acquisition or use of required transportation resources to satisfy resource requests from the next lower BCERMS level and to meet the needs of the centre.

## 4.10 Finance/Administration Section

The centre Finance/Administration Section assembles and monitors incident-related costs, and administers any necessary procurement contracts. It also provides compensation and claims services for the agency or jurisdiction.

The objective of this function is to ensure that all financial records are maintained throughout the event or disaster. All on-duty time must be recorded for all centre personnel and, in the case of the EOC, on-duty time sheets must be collected from Field Level Supervisors or Incident Commanders and their staff. This section also ensures there is continuity of the payroll process for all employees responding to the event or disaster at the Site Support Level.

### Finance/Administration Section Chief

The Finance/Administration Section Chief is responsible for all financial and administrative aspects of the emergency or disaster. The chief ensures that financial and claims records for all organizations participating in the centre are maintained throughout the event or disaster.

### Time Unit

The Time Unit:

- tracks, records, and reports all on-duty time for centre personnel and equipment working during the emergency or disaster,
- ensures that personnel time records, travel expense claims and other related forms are prepared and submitted for payment, and
- tracks time and costs for all equipment by working closely with the operations section and resources unit.

### Purchasing Unit

This unit coordinates all vendor contracts not previously addressed by existing approved vendor lists, and coordinates with Supply Units to prepare vendor, lease and rental contracts.

### Compensation & Claims Unit

The Compensation & Claims Unit has three distinct purposes:

- tracking occurrences, which may give rise to a claim under Workers' Compensation legislation,
- tracking occurrences which may give rise to a claim under the compensation section of any relevant legislation, and
- tracking occurrences that may give rise to a claim in negligence for bodily injury and/or property damage.

The unit works closely with the Documentation Unit at the site and site support levels.

The unit maintains logs on the claims, obtains witness statements, documents investigations, and follows agency and WCB requirements as applicable. A Claims Management Specialist may be used. This specialist, along with the Risk Management Officer, also advises on potential claims that may arise from future operations.

**Cost Unit**

The Cost Unit:

- collects and documents all costs, including personnel, equipment, supplies, and services,
- coordinates all fiscal recovery with agencies offering emergency assistance through the centre,
- prepares and maintains a cumulative cost report for the event or disaster, which is included in the regular status reports, and
- prepares cost estimates for future operations.